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THE ATOM AND THE WAY



# THE ATOM AND THE WAY

by

MAURICE BROWNE

*'The way to do is to be'—Laotzu*

LONDON  
VICTOR GOLLANZ LTD

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R. N.

*Made and Printed in England by The Cornwall Press Ltd.,  
Paris Garden, London, S.E.1.*

## FOREWORD.

The day before yesterday President Truman made his world-shattering announcement (the phrase *world-shattering* is meant literally). Yesterday I re-read, for the first time in thirteen years, a play which the late Robert Nichols and I had written eighteen years ago : it had predicted accurately, alike in outline and in detail, material consequences which would follow the controlled release of atomic energy ; it was called *Wings over Europe*.

Nichols wrote the first draft and then called me in as collaborator : the theme, the title, the general architectural design and this first draft of the play were solely his ; his, too, were most of the predictions. It was a happy collaboration, for us both : a subject of vital though terrifying import, not merely to the play's authors, but to mankind ; a lovely old house and garden for workshop, in a lovely old village ; and the companionship of Nichols' greatly gifted wife and Arnold Bennett.

The New York Theatre Guild presented the play at the Martin Beck Theatre in December, 1928, with their customary understanding, attention to detail, and disregard of difficulties or cost ; it was brilliantly directed by Rouben Mamoulian, and brilliantly acted ; at the end of its New York run it toured some of the larger American cities. In book-form it had three American editions in four months and received generous comment from press and public, though its warnings were taken lightly.

In April, 1932, Ellen Van Volkenburg presented the play at the Globe Theatre, London : she, too, gave, unstintingly, effort, money and understanding ; the direction, by myself, attempted no more than to follow

the pattern set so admirably by Mamoulian ; and the acting was again, in the main, excellent. It was a complete failure. In book-form, also, it attracted little attention here, and much of that little was unfavourable ; its warnings, as in America, received scant heed, though its title had many copyists.

When war came and bombs rained from the air over the world, people began—so it seemed, from letters, conversations, press-cuttings—to recall this already more-than-half-forgotten play but not yet to understand its warnings : its authors had been concerned, not with the effects of high explosive, but with those of the controlled release of atomic energy : these latter are, materially, immeasurable (and this word too is meant literally). To-day no thoughtful person in the world is concerned, primarily, with anything material else.

When Nichols and I wrote the play—he thirty-five, I forty-seven—material effects were our primary concern ; neither of us had yet reached the age, or the stage of understanding, from which effects other than material can, most often, be dispassionately observed. This pamphlet is written with a primarily different concern. Where it speaks of material effects, the Nichols whom I knew and loved would have agreed unreservedly with what is said : where it speaks of other matters, he should not be held in any degree responsible ; he might have agreed, or he might not : it is no longer possible to say. But I like to think that the entity which here was Robert Nichols regards me with a sardonic yet not unfriendly grin from some Hyperborean region and says, with a duly sepulchral chuckle : “ To it, old cock ! ”

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>FOREWORD</b>	v
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	xi
<b>PART I.</b> In the world of physics : .. . . . .	I
1. Quantitative effects of nuclear fission .. . .	I
2. Qualitative effects of nuclear fission .. . .	6
<b>PART II.</b> In the world of metaphysic : .. . . .	15
1. Content of the metaphysical field .. . . .	15
2. 'The instant of illumination' .. . . .	19
3. Does Knowledge exist as a fact ? .. . .	23
<b>PART III.</b> Personal interlude .. . . .	27
<b>PART IV.</b> In the 'actual' world ; conversation with an old poet : .. . . .	35
1. He looks back on his life .. . . .	35
2. He speaks of his teachers .. . . .	36
3. 'The fourth road' .. . . .	38
4. The old poet defines Knowledge .. . . .	40
5. He speaks of the Knower .. . . .	44
6. The old poet suggests an operational test .. . .	50
7. The old poet's listeners discuss him .. . .	60
<b>PART V.</b> In the everyday world .. . . .	66
<b>NOTE</b> .. . . . .	79



*These things I know now.*

*Life has been bittersweet in the tasting:*  
*And that's a savoury flavour, how*  
*Hasting or wasting*  
*I may have been in the tasting.*

*This, too, I know: that all,*  
*Viewed from here, is a clear pattern;*  
*Though watcher and botcher, asprawl,*  
*Saint and slattern,*  
*Peer forth in turn from the pattern.*

*Last, I know this: that this,*  
*In the moment of now, is being.*  
*Oh, let it be not curse but kiss,*  
*Not blindness but seeing,*  
*In this moment of now, which alone is being.*



## GLOSSARY

In Stuart Chase's witty and often wise book, *The Tyranny of Words*—a book which, despite its fallacies, might well be made compulsory reading for all pamphleteers, parsons and politicians—the Socratic thesis is ably upheld that many, if not most, human ills result from 'bad language': the use of undefined terms, which may thus have different meanings for different people, and of abstract terms incapable of definition by operational tests (what constitutes a trustworthy operational test will be discussed later). Accordingly, in an attempt to avoid such—or at least much—bad language in this pamphlet, the meanings with which sundry words are used by its author are given below. Some readers may find these meanings unfamiliar or unwelcome; but none will, it is hoped, accuse the author of meaning fried onions, when he mentions poached eggs.

The word *physics* is used, not in the specialized sense customary to-day, but in its older sense: the study of *phusis*, of 'becoming,' of what our grandfathers called 'Nature'; that is, of everything subject to observation by our senses and reason. The word *physicist* is used similarly.

The word *metaphysic* is also used in its olden sense: the study of that field, if any, which lies beyond the field of physics. The words *metaphysical* and *metaphysicist* are used similarly.

The words *material* and *spiritual* are customarily used today to designate that which pertains in kind to the respective fields of physics and, if the field exists, metaphysic; and the word *material* has already

been thus used in the Foreword. These words are, however, unsatisfactory, since they almost always connote, alike for their user and their reader, a sense of duality, of a 'pair of opposites,' and so of conflict; if the field of metaphysic exists, its content, as will become evident later, is necessarily monistic\* and wholly non-conflictual.

In an attempt to avoid such connotation of idea, the words *quantitative* and *qualitative* (similarly *quantity*, *quality*, etc.) are used instead in the earlier parts of this pamphlet. These words are by no means satisfactory either, but they indicate with reasonable clarity the difference in kind between the two fields, and the word *qualitative* in itself tends to exclude the idea of duality.

The word *religion* is used today with three distinct meanings: awareness (see below) of what is commonly called 'the divine'; doctrine purporting to derive from Knowledge (see below) of 'the divine'; and an organized quantitative body of persons, an 'institution,' claiming to represent, and generally recognized as representing, such doctrine officially, together with their followers. This threefold use of the word causes confusion; and the word itself, also, like the words *material* and *spiritual*, has almost inevitable connotations of idea, some of them exceptionally misleading. Three different words, therefore, are used in this pamphlet to designate the three meanings; the first meaning is already covered by the word *awareness*, since 'the divine' is an aspect of the qualitative; for the second, in line with the

\*In the popular, not the doctrinal, sense of the word.

practice of René Guénon and Marco Pallis\*, the word *Tradition* (similarly *Traditional*, *Traditionalist*, etc.) is used: by its use reference is intended primarily to the Brahman, Buddhist, Christian, Judaic, Moslem and Taoist Traditions; for the third meaning, the word *Church* is used.

Further definitions follow:

*fact*: an event or process in the quantitative field, verified or verifiable by human senses and reason (similarly *factual*, etc.);

*knowledge*: rational recognition of fact (similarly *know*, *known*, *knowable*, etc.);

~~awareness~~: recognition, beyond senses or reason, of the qualitative (similarly *aware*);

*Knowledge*: realized awareness† (similarly *Know*, *Known*, *Knowable*, etc.).

These last two definitions are definitions only, not assumptions. The questions whether either awareness or Knowledge exists in fact will be examined later.

*Causality*: 'the chain of causes,' cause and effect regarded, not as duality, but as a monad‡;

*Nuclear fission*: controlled release of atomic energy.

*Apology to feminine readers*:

The author apologizes on behalf of certain

\* The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness in other respects also to both these writers; neither of them, however, should be held responsible for his views.

† i.e., sustained apprehension of 'truths' recognized in awareness, together with their regular application to daily living.

‡ Again in the popular, not the scientific, sense of the word; as above, *monistic*.

anomalies in the English language, for which, he suggests, he is not solely and personally responsible. The generic use of the words *he*, *him*, *his*, *man*, *men*, *mankind*, to include the concepts *she*, *her*, *hers*, *woman*, *women*, *womankind*, is doubtless shocking, like sundry other male idiosyncracies, to the female; but there it, and they, are.

It needs to be kept constantly in mind that *all* words belong to the quantitative field and so, being subject to quantitative laws, are unstable. Moreover, the word is never the thing; at best it is a signpost pointing toward the thing: often, a signpost pointing away from it; the word *atom* itself, for example, etymologically means 'that which cannot be divided.' All which the author dares to hope is that the above signposts do not point, obtrusively, in an opposite direction from that intended.

*The reader is courteously requested to keep the foregoing definitions in mind throughout Parts I and II of this pamphlet. Some of the meanings given will be re-assessed in Part IV.*



## PART I. IN THE WORLD OF PHYSICS.

### 1. *Quantitative effects of nuclear fission.*

These, as stated in the Foreword, are quantitatively immeasurable.\* They are briefly summarized in the first four lines of the next paragraph but one. How long it will be before they become widely operative cannot yet be said; but the period, historically considered, is likely to be very brief, probably at most a decade or two. The summary, and the illustrations which follow it, are intentionally put in popular and highly coloured terms: these terms are not meant to be scientifically precise; indeed, by the nature of the case, no terms could be.

At present, and for as many thousands of years into the past as knowledge has reached, all organized forms of quantitative human activity—*e.g.*, Government, the Church,† Industry, Trade, Finance—have

\* During the past four months this statement has been publicly confirmed, repeatedly and in the gravest possible terms, by many qualified and responsible authorities. Meanwhile, all over the world, press, public and politicians still for the most part talk and act, as if Prometheus had not loosed from heaven a new and incomparably more terrible fire. Man harnesses the very energy of the universe itself: and worldlings think they can use it with impunity to bargain, browbeat, destroy.—9, *xii*, 1945.

† Reference is intended, not to the Christian Churches only or primarily, but to all Churches claiming to represent Tradition: the degree of dependence on such methods, however, varies with the various Churches; Buddhist Tradition has no Church (in the defined meaning of the word).

been and are based, in fact, on quantitative sanctions and upheld by quantitative methods, the latter usually, in the last analysis, force. Government is upheld by the policeman, the bomber and the gun. The Church is buttressed by fear: fear of punishment before and after death, of excommunication, of public disapproval; and by reward: the Church's approval, public approval, happiness and 'safety' after death. Industry began with manual labour; this was supplemented at an early stage by the spade and the wheel; these in turn by the windmill, the watermill, the labour of animals other than human trained for that purpose; these again by ~~further~~ machines, operated first by labour, later by various forms of combustion: wood, coal, oil; these in turn by the internal-combustion engine. And similarly with all other organized forms of quantitative human activity.

The main and most obvious quantitative effect of nuclear fission is that these organized forms will shortly cease to exist, save fortuitously or by tolerance, in their present or any recognizable aspect. The difference between a cave-man's pair of hands and the most powerful engine yet built by man, compared with the difference between that engine and nuclear fission, is one drop of rain compared with the Pacific Ocean, an amoeba compared with Shakespeare.

You hold a pamphlet in your hand; you have mastered nuclear fission. You can use the atomic energy contained in the pamphlet's paper and ink to turn the chair in which you are sitting, the room, the house, the city, the country, the continent, the planet,

into—at your own will—food, gold, or dust.

These are not the ravings of a madman; they are, unhappily, statements of fact.\* How soon you will be able to do these things and at what cost, it is not yet possible to say; but you will be able to do them: provided, of course, that you are clever enough to evade the laws which will be passed to prevent you.

Today man stands at his ultimate crossroads (ultimate, quantitatively speaking). One road leads to the inevitable destruction within a few years of all which is commonly called civilization and perhaps even to the destruction—it is within the bounds of factual possibility—of this planet itself. Another road leads toward a quantitative Utopia, with abundance of ease, leisure, pleasure, for every human being on earth. A third road, an erratic, ill-designed and intensely human *via media*, zigzags back and forth between the other two, and travellers on it find themselves now on the first road, now on the second. There is a fourth road: it leads in an entirely different direction; we shall come to it later: it is the primary concern of this pamphlet.

The first road, leading to destruction, has been trodden with savage determination by self-righteous men throughout their history. Our senses and reason supply no compulsive cause for believing that they will not tread it again: rather, the reverse; the tale of bygone civilizations affords little comfort, nor does the tale of our own world-wars. The next few years will show how far along that road such men

\*See glossary: but see also the last sentence of the first paragraph of I, 1. The word *factual*, however, in the next paragraph, is used precisely.

will travel, dragging their fellows with them; and doubtless, as the millennium hastens to its close, more and more voices will be heard prophesying the end of the world. In one sense at least they will prophesy truly: a world is ending.

Often gallantly and bravely, man the moralist has tried to follow the second road, leading toward a quantitative Utopia; our social record as a species is not wholly vile. And it is not unreasonable to think, despite the vast, loathsome and unparalleled horrors of our epoch, that the social conscience of mankind is more widely awake over a larger area than in much of the past. But those who proclaim a quantitative Utopia just round the corner—or anywhere—have learned little, it would seem, from our terrible years. Utopia is ‘no place’; quantitative roads may lead toward it: they do not arrive.

The third road, zig-zag, ill-designed, intensely human—that *via media* which we British folk so dearly love—is the road which, senses and reason leave no doubt, the rulers of men will for the most part seek to travel in the years immediately ahead. There is likely to be a race between them and those who travel the first road; they who at any given moment find themselves ahead on the first road will, for that moment, control it. Their control can, by the nature of things, be quantitative only.

There is no abiding surety on any one of these three roads, just as there is no abiding surety on—or for—this planet. Death awaits the star also: sooner or later. And there are some who contemplate with equanimity the end of a civilization which, in blind and brutal ignorance or disregard of qualitative

values, has contrived and carried out, as climax and apogee to its centuries of fear, oppression and greed, a massacre of the innocents, a torment of the weak and a destruction of the noblest works of man, on a scale unprecedented in historical knowledge. There are even some who claim to contemplate with gladness the extinction of a species which has perpetrated for untold thousands of years on its fellow animals, human and other, cruelties viler and more bestial than the most ferocious cruelties ever practised on its victims by the most savage beast of prey. Both points of view can be understood; but the second, at least, is not one which lessens the victims' pain. For this reason ~~man~~ the moralist condemns it.

Moralism\*—the attempt to standardize conduct for the common good in accordance with an agreed quantitative code, and the duty of the individual to conform to that code for the common good and his own satisfaction—has been preached throughout the centuries by ethical teachers as a cure (the more modest have said, an alleviation) of human ills. Ethical teachers are often persons of high principle; they are not invariably persons of high intelligence. "There's nothing on earth," Evelyn Arthur remarks in *Wings Over Europe*, "except religion, on which men are so divided as the common good."

If you eat your aunt in Patagonia, you inherit not merely her chattels but her virtues; if you eat your aunt in Bayswater, you will spend the rest of your life in Broadmoor (if the jury takes a merciful view). If you set London on fire during the first eight

\*No reference is intended here to a morality which purports to be based on Knowledge; that will be discussed later.

months of 1939, you were merely a criminal ; if you set London on fire during the following eight months and were British, you were (in British eyes) a traitor ; if you set London on fire during the following eight months and were German, you were (in German eyes) a hero. If you, feminine reader, marry six husbands simultaneously in Thibet, your neighbours will regard you with reverence and esteem ; if you marry them in Ealing Broadway, your neighbours will regard you with quite other feelings : even—perhaps especially—the local brothel-keepers.

Moralism varies so utterly with period, place, climate, circumstance, that it would be hard to name one act which, under certain conditions, ~~is~~ not the highest moralistic virtue and, under others, the basest moralistic vice ; in wartime, the same act in the same place may be both within an hour. Moralism is an attempt to transmogrify quantitative effects by quantitative causes ; yet it is—or should be—common knowledge that no problem can be solved on its own plane. Or, to put one aspect of the same thing in popular terms, material remedies cannot cure materially incurable ills. But it may be a mistake in fact, and it would certainly be a mistake in logic, to conclude that such ills are therefore necessarily incurable.

## 2. Qualitative effects of nuclear fission.

None.

But that monosyllable needs pointing.

Any fool, knave, ‘ patriot ’ or ‘ moralist can,’ in a moment of time, destroy a saint or a masterpiece with a gun, a city with a bomb, a world with nuclear fission : if not to-day, then to-morrow. The qualities

of these, however, remain, not merely undamaged, but untouched.

Shakespeare writes an 'immortal' sonnet; you, reading it, seem to yourself aware,\* for a blinding and 'immortal' instant, of its quality. You read the sonnet, you sit by a river-pool, you listen to the friend of your bosom, you make love to the girl who is the sun and the moon and all the stars singing in your heart—and, suddenly, you seem to yourself aware of the qualities of these: you share in the blinding illumination of the printed word, of the brown stones under the green water, of the tone in your friend's voice, of the ecstasy in your beloved's eyes, of the magic in the curve of her breast. The next moment your heart begins to feel the joy-pain of this seeming awareness: and the awareness itself begins to fade; you seek, with brain and will and senses, to hold it: and it fades a little more; you try to tell your friend, to whisper in your beloved's ear, to write down, that of which you had believed yourself aware: and the words which you write or speak seem to you the stammerings of a fool, a flat and distorted reflection in a cracked, curved mirror, a mockery, a lie.

What then, in you, was aware? Or was it all illusion?

Tell this last to the saint, the poet,† the lover: and listen to their laughter. "No," they will say, "it is the like qualities in us which have been aware of the like qualities in those; like calls to like. And in this

\* See glossary.

† The word *poet* is used here, and throughout this pamphlet, to denote the artist-craftsman, *poète*, whatever his medium; words, music, paint, stone, wood, etc.

immortal instant of awareness—for it is not mortal,” they will say, “since it abides, outside place-time, in an unchanging and ~~un~~temporal Now beyond the laws of decay and death—in this instant of awareness Knower and Known are one.” And they will quote Shelley to you :

‘*For love, and beauty, and delight,*  
‘*There is no death nor change: their might*  
‘*Exceeds our organs, which endure*  
‘*No light, being themselves obscure.*’

Did Shelley, in fact, Know that which he wrote ? Do they, in fact, Know that which they speak ? An answer to these questions will be attempted in this pamphlet ; you will decide whether the answer is, for you, factually truthful.

“Wait a minute,” the attentive reader says; “come back to that sonnet by Shakespeare. It consists of form and content : the sonnet-form ‘given,’ the content all that Shakespeare had and was. My senses and reason—no, not mine,” he corrects himself, for the attentive reader is humble : “but those of other human beings wiser than I—can measure this form, this content; ‘even Shakespeare,’ as Victor Hugo said, ‘was a man’.”

“Yes,” the saint, the poet, the lover, reply, “what you say is probably true. But from this wedlock of form and content is born a child: your own instant of illumination. Can senses and reason measure that ?”

You hesitate. “Perhaps not,” you answer after a moment, since you are intellectually honest; “but

what of it? I provisionally admit the existence of quality in its own right: I even admit provisionally that, though the masterpiece or the world be destroyed, their qualities remain. But that signifies nothing. The masterpiece has gone: its quality is already forgotten; even the very name of Shakespeare will at last fade, utterly and for ever, from the memory of mankind. And, if the world is destroyed, not one human being will be left to remember anything."

"Yes," they say, "that, too, is true."

"And," you go on, "though the masterpiece and the world have each its own quality, how can this be said of the saint? The masterpiece is fixed in time, the world in space: the saint is a human being, changing in his every movement, his every cell, from moment to moment."

"The masterpiece and the world," your companions reply, "are also changing thus; the world moves through space, science tells us, faster than any speed-maniac, and the masterpiece is sold at Christie's. Structurally, too, these change, ceaselessly; their rate of change is slower, and our eyes do not see the processes of decay: but our eyes see, when centuries have passed, that there has been decay. Look at the smile on the face of the Sphinx: time has almost erased it; at the rock: it is worn to sand."

You realize that in your last remark you were cast, willy-nilly, for a not very intelligent rôle: you decide to play it thoroughly!

"But even so," you accordingly persist, with a twinkle in your eye, "how can that which is in so continuous and rapid a state of flux as a human

being—and, once again, the saint is a human being—have its own quality?"

"Because," they answer, "the quality of that flux is itself an integral part of the quality of the saint."

You pretend to grow angry. "But the quality of the flux of the saint," you scold at them, "differs, *toto cælo*, from the quality of the flux of the masterpiece. The saint has volition."

"Precisely," they grin.

Every atom, every cell, every blade of grass, every midge, every mountain, every star, every thought which ever has been or will be thought, every feeling felt, every word written or spoken, every tiniest act—your reading of this phrase; the paring of your little finger-nail—is a unique fact in history; and each one of these facts has its own individual 'smell,' so to speak: its 'itness.' So too with every bird, every beast, every human being—the uncounted billions of our species for uncounted myriads of years. This 'itness of it' has\* been provisionally called quality, and to these unimaginably many individual qualities, henceforward in this pamphlet, the name *entities* will be given. Their 'timelessness' is self-evident and, if the field of metaphysic exists, they exist in it. It does not necessarily follow that the field exists, still less that it will repay study.

Can the metaphysicist, any more than the physicist, say at what point on the earth's surface plain grows mountain, at what moment of time foetus becomes child? Can he—or can you—separate in fact the you reading these words from the you breathing: or the you breathing from the air which you breathe? So

See glossary.

too with the entities of each one of these : they overlap, intermingle, are woven together, inseparable links in an unending chain ; separatism, an ambushed foe, stalks physicist and metaphysicist alike every inch of the way. Its consequences are evident to-day ; we shall come back to them.

Meanwhile let us try to take the matter a step further.

You were a German citizen : a Jew ; your fore-fathers had lived in Germany for many generations. - Ten years ago your home was burned to the ground, your chattels and livelihood stolen, your father kicked to death, your wife raped, your daughter butchered : all this, before your eyes. Because of your Tradition and of your belief in your Tradition and of the long tragic history of your people, when these things happened, you said in your heart, in the words of your great compatriot : 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Then your own turn came. You were taken to Buchenwald. Hour after hour, day after day, the torture went on, and on. In your agony you did one of three things at the last : you denied your God in your heart ; or you denied Him with your lips but not in your heart ; or you reaffirmed Him. Then you died. And no human being except yourself ever knew which of these three things you had truly done. But, whichever it was, its quality—according to the poet, the lover, the saint—is part of that entity which, in an unchanging Now beyond place-time, is you.

Again you are a German : a Gentile. 'It was you who burned this man's house, stole his livelihood and chattels, murdered his father, raped his wife, but-

chered his daughter, beat the man himself to a pulp in Buchenwald. Now your turn, too, has come. Tomorrow, in punishment for your crimes, you will be hanged by the neck until you are dead. You sit in your cell, counting the seconds as they pass. You, also, will do one of three things at the last : you will repent in your heart of what you have done; or you will profess repentance with your lips but not feel it in your heart; or you will neither profess nor feel repentance (by *repentance* is meant—not the hope to avoid your earthly punishment, not the fear of some hell after death—but a change in your own very quality). Then you, also, will be dead. And no human being except yourself will ever know which of these three things you truly did. But, whichever it was, its quality, too—according to the poet, the lover, the saint—is part of that entity which, in an unchanging Now beyond place-time, is you.

And—if they speak aright—in that unchanging Now your entity, dead Gentile, and yours, dead Jew, are timelessly and inseparably linked and interknit within that entity, that binding and unbreakable chain, which is the quality of place-time itself : ‘frozen for ever’, so to speak, into ‘form’, as a work of art is ‘frozen into form’ *sub specie æternitatis*.

And it becomes at once evident how, in that unchanging world, if it exists, there is no duality.

“But what is all this to me,” impatiently cries a very different reader from the last : “what is all this to me, unless that entity which is I is conscious I ?”

We shall come to that, too, later.

You are an acorn : by no effort, quantitative or qualitative, can you grow into an elm ; a sparrow ; by

no effort, into an eagle; a rock : by no effort, into a rose. You are a human being: at any moment, by one act of thought, you can change your entity. You do, in fact, so change it, for the most part unwittingly, each moment of your life. But you can change it wittingly also: each waking moment, at least, you have power of choice. As that dead Gentile and that dead Jew had power of choice. The only place in the known universe where quantity has not, of necessity, power over you is within yourself; there you are master: or can be, if you wish it and will endure the pains, which are great. We human beings, alone of all forms of life known to our senses and reason, have control of what takes place within our hearts and minds: we alone have power of choice and can change our entities; not into elm or eagle or rose, nor into any quantity: but qualitatively.

Thus at least, in every age, its prophets and poets affirm, declaring that

*'The mind is its own place, and in itself*

*'Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.'*

'The true hero,' they tell us, 'is happy in hell'; and again: 'The kingdom of God is within you'. But they expressly warn us that these last two sayings are true only in so far as our hearts and minds do not, themselves, yield power to quantity within them by battling against its power in its own place, and that we shall thus battle and yield, if we feel anger, fear, hatred.

Those are the two conditions which they set for us: and, if we fulfil those two conditions wholly, they say, then no quantitative power known to man, not nuclear fission itself, can compel us to think one

thought or to feel one feeling which we do not wish to think or feel; furthermore, they show us means which, they claim, will enable us to fulfil the two conditions. Within this given framework, they affirm, *you make your own entity.*

Later, an operational method to test the truth or falsity of these sayings of theirs, and of all kindred sayings, will be described.

The statements made hitherto in this pamphlet, in so far as they have been made by its author and have purported to be statements of fact, have been statements of fact; most of such facts are facts of common knowledge, previously verified by the reader's personal experience. A few may deny the accuracy of certain of these statements; many will deny the accuracy of those statements which have been quoted from others. Once again it might be a mistake in fact, as it would certainly be a mistake in logic, to conclude that statement is necessarily invalidated by denial.

You are an oriental scholar. You quote in the original Chinese to a friend, also an oriental scholar, a poem by Laotzu. Your five-year-old son and a fourteen-year-old lad, who has just been billeted on you, are standing by. "Oh, Daddy," exclaims your small son, laughing: "you *are* making a funny noise!" "Gibberish," grunts the other boy under his breath. You were, perhaps, not very prudent to speak Chinese in that company. You and your friend, however, learned a good deal from the comments of those two children! though not about Laotzu.

## PART II.

### IN THE WORLD OF METAPHYSIC.

#### 1. *Content of the metaphysical field.*

Hitherto this pamphlet's main preoccupation has been with physics; an attempt has been made to follow a trail through the tangled undergrowth of fact to a point whence it may be at least possible to attempt a survey of the metaphysical field, if the latter exists. Nothing has been postulated (except the meaning of certain words)\*: nothing will be; thoughtful people follow the guidance of senses and reason as far as it will lead: and it leads a long way; it† has led mankind of nuclear fission.

Senses and reason have shown that, if the field of metaphysic exists, entities exist in it: among them, the entity of the instant of illumination. Does anything else, factually known by senses and reason, exist there? Senses and reason unhesitatingly answer: "Nothing."

\* The attentive reader may claim that, while the author has not postulated a necessary factual separateness between quality and quantity and has seemingly attempted to avoid implying it, he has failed in his attempt. The author suggests that the ratiocinative process, itself, separates, and that herein lies the ultimate invalidity of all ratiocination *per se*; in our era, however, the vast majority of Western minds are rationalistically conditioned: and therefore a rationalistic approach to the subject-matter of a pamphlet intended primarily for Western readers may perhaps be excused. Later, that subject-matter will be viewed from a different angle.

† But see p. 74.

Those who have not fully grasped the terms of that question may declare that God exists : forgetting that God is not a fact by definition. The attentive reader will be more cautious.

" If by ' God ' is meant a Great Architect of the universe," he may say, " many mystics have testified not only to His existence—by the word *His*," he may, once again, interrupt himself to explain, " I do not intend to imply that He is male or even a Person ; and I use capital letters solely because so vast a concept demands reverence. Such mystics have testified," he continues, " not only to God's existence but to their personal and direct experience of Him. William James describes many such cases in detail and bears witness to a vast number more, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*."

That book too, like *The Tyranny of Words*, might well be made compulsory reading, this time for all rationalists. " Here are the facts," James says in effect ; " the rationalist may interpret them in any way which seems to him fitting : but he will ignore or deny them at his peril." And James demonstrates the fact of awareness so fully and with such detailed documentation that it would be waste of labour to demonstrate it again ; henceforth in this pamphlet it will be taken as proved\*. This is not, of course, to say that awareness necessarily implies Knowledge.

James sees clearly that the interpretation which the

\*If any reader thinks that this is a *petitio principii*, he is urged to study William James' work more closely. Jung goes even further than James in his condemnation of extreme rationalism: "This *hybris*," he says, "is always the shortest way to the insane asylum" (*The Secret of the Golden Flower*, fifth impression, p. 111).

mystic, especially the Western mystic, so often gives to his experience is not necessarily correct: presumptive statement is not ~~evidence~~; and the preliminary evidence, at least, is against that interpretation. In the first place, as previously said, God is not a fact by definition; and in the second, as the attentive reader has pointed out, 'God' is a vast concept, demanding reverence: if God is a Person, the very mention of His name requires deep and sincere humility, and any claim to personal familiarity with Him is automatically suspect; even the very study of the concept, if such a thing be possible, needs the gravest respect and care.

We Westerners, however, are not only apt to take God for granted—no bad thing in many ways—but also to treat Him in a *Good morning, old fellow* fashion; indeed, we invoke Him to aid our acts of violence, and pat Him on His hypothetical back, when, we knock our 'enemy' down. Such a blasphemous use of that vast name and such a childish misunderstanding of that vast concept profoundly shock Eastern Traditionalists, many Western Traditionalists and countless thoughtful people who are not Traditionalists. The self-righteous, the fanatic and the qualitative quack, exploiting the simple, have played their part in bringing mankind face to face with the disaster which confronts it to-day.

It is easily understandable, however, that the mystic, flooded by his instant of illumination and seeking—like the saint, the poet, the lover—to express his awareness in words, should—again like them, stammeringly—give to that which he has experienced

the highest name which he knows; later, an attempt will be made to specify more exactly, if it be at all possible, what the object of his experience is. But meanwhile it needs to be remembered, by the metaphysicist no less than by the Western mystic, that comparatively few Eastern mystics give that high name to the object of their experience and that one of the oldest, least corrupted and most venerated of Traditions, Buddhism, does not claim any Knowledge of God and, according to most Western commentators, does not even affirm God's existence or directly concern itself with God.\* The Brahman-concept of Brāhmaṇa Tradition, also, is so far remote from any customary God-concept of the West that the 'orthodox' Christian (or, indeed, Moslem) often finds it difficult to understand. Of the six great Traditions to which reference is primarily intended in this pamphlet, three only are theistic and two are non-theistic, in the everyday Western usage of those words.

It follows that 'God' does not necessarily exist in the field of metaphysic, if that field itself exists. And the same is similarly true of all those hypothetical entities, postulated by many and commonly called supernatural, which theologians and metaphysicists frequently claim as subject to their study, although there is no general factual knowledge that such entities exist either.

\* Nor does Taoist Tradition, which resembles Buddhism in many doctrinal respects. *Tao*, usually translated *the Way*, was taught by Laotzu, and a record of the teaching is preserved in the *Tao Teh Ching*; the latter has been well translated by Witter Bynner (*The Way of Life*, published by the John Day Company, New York, 1944). The Taoist Church, on the other hand, is theistic.

This is not, of course, to say that either God or such entities do *not* exist: it is merely to say that, in the metaphysical field, they do not automatically exist as entities corresponding to generally known facts; if, however, they or any of them do exist or ever have existed as facts in the knowledge of any person or persons, then all such facts have, automatically, their own entities in the metaphysical field. Strictly and rationally considered—and at this stage no other consideration enters—the field of metaphysic, if it exists, contains, so far as senses and reason know, *only* entities.

Doubtless it is for some such reason that metaphysic is often ranked as futile: the gyrations of 'a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat which isn't there.' Those who rank it thus overlook or ignore, however, that entity which corresponds to what has been called in these pages 'the instant of illumination.'

## 2. '*The instant of illumination.*'

The word *instant* has been used hitherto, because such illumination occurs instantaneously and, for most of us, lasts but a moment. It is by no means momentary, however, for all: for many, awareness recurs regularly and lasts hours, days or, longer; precise rules have been laid down for attaining and sustaining it, by or in association with Tradition: these rules entail severe mental and qualitative self-discipline. The seemingly inviolable serenity of certain persons in old age, exemplified by the Chinese sages of story, appears to be a similar state of consciousness.

Senses and reason, confronted with this fact of awareness, hesitate : it is a fact for which they have hitherto failed to provide a factual explanation at all widely, let alone generally, accepted. A few rationalistic extremists, like the author of *The Tyranny of Words*, deny the fact's existence : an attitude not wholly dissimilar to that of the lad who heard the oriental scholar quoting the Chinese poem ; moreover, they often deny it with an oddly irrational anger.

So far as senses and reason can observe this state of awareness, they note that, in it, every normal 'self' of the aware person seems to be transcended, together with the self's sense of all its normal conditions, including place-time (they observe a not dissimilar phenomenon in artist-craftsmen, scientists and technicians, whenever the attention of any one of these is wholly focussed on the object of his concern : and indeed in many human beings—and perhaps in other animals too—at certain moments). They note further that, again so far as they can observe, in this state of awareness the aware person does in fact seem to identify himself qualitatively with that of which he is aware. And, moreover; in those cases where the person using senses and reason to observe awareness has himself experienced awareness, they recall that, in those moments or periods when he was aware, they themselves did not consciously function, that in this respect they wholly resembled—and may therefore be—conditions of the seemingly transcended self, and that, when they returned to conscious functioning, they were, so to speak, 'told' by that which had been aware (whose nature will be discussed later) that, in the state of awareness, it did in fact so identify itself:

Senses and reason are, accordingly, driven either to admitted incomprehension of awareness or to the only provisional conclusion logically possible within their frame of reference : awareness exists in a world other than that of place-time and, in awareness, quantity is transcended by, and one with, quality.

Or, to put the same thing in popular terms » " Man has "—under certain circumstances—" a ' soul ' ; and the ' soul ' is not mortal." It is an odd conclusion for logic to have reached, even provisionally. But, before considering it—and logic—further, let us return for a moment to a matter mentioned earlier.

That self-centred reader who cried out, in terror at the thought of death, " What is all this to me, unless that entity which is I is conscious I ? " has begun to feel happier. But has he cause? Has he ever been aware? If he has not, nothing which has been said, nothing to which senses and reason have led us, step by step, has suggested, let alone proved, that his entity is conscious, his I a conscious I ; the only entity provisionally proved by senses and reason to have consciousness is that entity which is, so to speak, itself quantity-quality, and its only state of consciousness, so far as senses and reason have observed, is awareness : all other forms of consciousness which they have observed occur in place-time and therefore, from their point of view, are quantitative and therefore are subject to decay and death.

What are the qualitative effects of this logical, albeit provisional, proof that, within the stated limitations, the soul exists and is immortal? As in the case of nuclear fission, none.

Logic is a wholly quantitative activity and so cannot

touch quality : however conclusively it may prove that the soul is immortal, it does not necessarily follow that the soul is immortal ; the converse of this, of course, holds equally true. Similarly, when we come to ask whether Knowledge exists, logic may reply that it does, or that it does not : but neither answer will affect the issue. For the attempt to ascertain whether Knowledge exists in fact, other tests will be needed. Senses and reason have taken us, in this respect, as far as they can ; let us by no means discard them : later they may again prove useful ; but, as we approach this last and most difficult of the questions asked in these pages, we are like men who have lost the use of eyes and ears, of our organs for tasting, smelling, touching.

Two scientists are talking in a Somersetshire village pub ; each of them is supreme in his own theoretic field : each is also a master-technician. Their talk is of nuclear fission ; it approaches 'high pressures' and, because it is veering close to 'official secrets,' turns back : but both men know that secrets more perilous perhaps than even nuclear fission are in process of being wrested from the universe by the mind of man. Finally it approaches the sub-atomic ; the scientists, being true scientists, are humble. "In that world," says one at last, "the laws which we know seem no longer valid." The other slowly nods assent.

Today science is blamed for the disasters which have befallen and the infinitely worse disasters which confront the world, and many cry that the terrifying secrets which it has learned should be destroyed. Destroy every brain in the world which knows those secrets, and the mind of man will rediscover them to-

morrow. And, moreover, how many of those who blame science acknowledge their own share of personal responsibility for man's misuse of his tremendous knowledge? Materialistic-minded practitioners of science have sinned against mankind, grievously; but they have not sinned alone.

Today, too, other men praise the skill and courage with which the brains and hands of their fellows have accomplished marvellous things. But who praises the marvels themselves? Who praises the majesty and glory of a universe which has such marvels to disclose? Who praises That-Which-Is and all Its wonders? And who, if there be an Architect, praises the Architect? In the Western hemisphere at least, a handful of scientists, poets, saints. We human beings need, above all else, to understand truly in our hearts the words of Leonardo da Vinci: *O mirabile giustizia dū te, Primo Motore: tu non hai voluto maucare a nessuna potenzia l'ordine e qualità de suoi necessari effetti\**. And it is in this spirit that we need to approach our final question.

### 3. Does Knowledge exist as a fact?

Unanimously the Traditions answer, "Yes."

Senses and reason have already found the fact of awareness none too palatable; confronted now with Tradition asserting that, furthermore, Knowledge factually exists, they shrug their metaphorical shoulders and walk off the field. "Obviously," they say, "we cannot disprove the assertion; but, without

\*The Italian words are difficult to translate literally into idiomatic English; a generally quoted and accepted paraphrase runs: "O marvellous justice of thee, Prime Mover, who to no cause hast denied its own effect."

our help, it cannot be proved, in any ordinary sense of the word *proof*."

Nevertheless, let us try to investigate further.

If Knowledge factually exists, as the Traditions claim, it must exist in the possession of a person or persons. "Yes," Traditionalists say, "it exists in our possession." When we ask them, however, what this Knowledge Knows, their Churches give us varying and sometimes conflicting answers. Two of the Churches, for example, assert with vehemence that theirs is the only true Knowledge: "There is one God," cries each of them, separately, "and He is exclusively ours; the gods of the other Traditions are false gods."

Furthermore, in the case of Christian Tradition at least, many, who have studied it closely and venerate it deeply, maintain that the practice of the Christian Churches is often at striking and painful variance with the doctrine. To such as these the Christian Churches reply in effect none the less: "We are the sole custodians of true doctrine. Those of you others who claim awareness are deceived. Submit to our authority, and you will attain true awareness; set yourselves against it, and suffer."

And, in fact, vast numbers of people do submit to their respective Churches and, by submitting, do also in fact attain a state of consciousness to which it would be not merely bad manners but also, provisionally, bad metaphysic to refuse the name *awareness*. This needs to be recognized and freely admitted, especially by those who find the fact as little to their liking as the rationalist finds the fact of awareness; in the pursuit of truth nothing can be lost and much is

gained by recognizing the validity of the distasteful.

Readers, on the other hand, who have come thus far without resenting facts, are in a different category ; their sole concern is to ascertain the facts about Knowledge, if it be possible, and then to act on them. They see a possibility, even in logic, that, beyond the reach of senses and reason, there may exist 'something,' which, if discovered, senses and reason may subsequently be able to verify. They find themselves, too—not so much unwilling, despite all fallacies and contradictions, to submit to the authority of a Church, for they have been long and painfully familiar with the dangers, to themselves and others, of intellectual or qualitative pride—as unable to submit : the very law of their being would, it seems to them, be abrogated by such submission.

And, in one of the Traditions at least, there is much to comfort and encourage such readers. The founder of Buddhism said to his disciples : "Test every word which I say to you, every smallest item of my teaching, in the crucible of your own experience."\*

The Lord Buddha taught explicitly, also; that the 'lower' animals are our brothers in fact ; this teaching is not reported of the founders of other Traditions by those who claimed to record their personal sayings. The recording may be incomplete : it is clearly not always accurate ; and some Christian saints have explicitly taught our brotherhood with the birds of the air and the beasts of the field ; Judaic, Moslem and Taoist saints have taught it, too ; and it is taught by Brahman Tradition. In such doctrine, whatever its source, separatism has no place.

\*A basic principle in Buddhist doctrine.

Furthermore, the quantitative source of doctrine cannot, in any sense or degree, effect its quality; qualitatively, it makes no difference who wrote *Hamlet*, or that Job was a character in a poem, or whether the quantitative source of Christian Tradition was the son of a Galilean carpenter or the protagonist in a Mystery-play or the incarnation of a demiurge. This may distress separatists; but 'the simple believer' has no cause to be distressed: his belief is rooted in quality itself, as will become apparent later.

Thus unarmoured then, unbuttressed by authority, laying aside all rational defences, acknowledging no law save inmost necessity, let us approach the edge of that abyss which gapes before us. It is enshrouded wholly in darkness; for all we know, it is bottomless: for all we know, it has no other side. Standing there on its very brink and commanding our little entities to that entity which is the quality of the place-time universe itself, together, fellow-venturers, we leap.

## PART III.

### PERSONAL INTERLUDE.

In the next section of this pamphlet an attempt will be made to portray an old man within whom, according to his students, Knowledge exists as a fact; he ~~will~~ be shown expounding certain aspects of Traditional doctrine to four enquirers, who are intended to be types rather than characters. A brief comment on the doctrine and its exponent is perhaps permissible here.

In the doctrine, as students of Tradition will at once recognize, there is or can be nothing 'new': its roots stretch back far beyond historical knowledge; and the student of comparative Tradition will feel no surprise that the old man gathers up various threads of various Traditions into one. Some readers, however, may feel surprise at the doctrine concerning the 'Personality of the Knowers'; a Traditionalist is less likely to do so. The subject is a difficult one, and detailed discussion of it would be out of place in a pamphlet of this nature; the interpretation of doctrine is conditioned, not by its interpreter alone, but to some extent at least also by those to whom the interpretation is addressed: in this case, 'the four enquirers'. The old man's students state that when the matter has been discussed with them, different shades of meaning which may be given to the word

Person have been examined and that its meaning is relative to the degree of enlightenment which has been attained by the student.\*

With reference to the old man himself a slightly longer and more specific explanation is, perhaps, not only permissible but due to the reader. While "the quantitative source of doctrine cannot, in any sense or degree, affect its quality," it may yet be asked, not unreasonably, whether the old man is a 'fictitious' character. He is not. He is, however, a 'composite portrait': of three actual people, each intimately known by—or, perhaps I should say, intimately knowing—me; and it is fair that the reader should be given all relevant facts about them.

Two of them are Westerners, one about my own age, known many years, the other about forty, known since early in the war; the third was an Easterner, considerably older than I, known for a brief period only but, throughout it, with a mutual clarity never continuously experienced by me before then, though often since; all three, perfectly normal people, going matter-of-factly about their daily chores. I shall venture to write of them as if they were one person, and he a Westerner, partly for the sake of simplicity and convenience, partly for reasons which will be-

\*The subject is fully and clearly discussed in *Peaks and Lamas* by Marco Pallis, pp. 323-5 *et passim* (Cassell, 2nd edition, 1940), a book strongly recommended to all students and, indeed, to lay-readers: a tale of physical as well as spiritual travel and adventure. It has been discussed of course, too, by numerous other writers, sometimes with exceptional insight: e.g., by Edward Carpenter in his *Drama of Love and Death*; Jung, though writing as a psychologist, shows repeatedly a deep understanding of many of the problems involved.

come clear in the next two paragraphs, and to call them, collectively, 'the old poet': *old*, because their average age to-day would be well into the middle sixties\*, *poet*,† because all three are (or were) expert artist-craftsmen in their respective (though different) fields, and because Western Tradition in its least corrupted form has been, for many generations, passed down in the English-speaking world chiefly by poets.

No doctrine has been attributed to 'the old poet' and, with one exception, no doctrinal term put into his mouth, which I have not received from each of these three people in turn independently; nor have I consciously omitted any relevant statement made by them or by any one of them: their teaching coincides in all respects; and most—I believe all—of the examples used by 'the old poet' to illustrate his doctrine are examples, or closely analogous to examples, which I have repeatedly heard used by one or other of the three. The term excepted is *Knower*: I have used it tentatively, and admittedly with misgivings, as a generic covering term to designate that order of Persons‡ which, according to the three, exists outside place-time; the two Westerners respectively use the word *Maker* and *Guide*: the Easterner used the word *Mahatma*, which may be translated with reasonable accuracy as *Great being*, provided that the word *being* is given the interpretation which will

\* The younger Westerner, though viewing the events of life from the early forties, views them in the same manner as the two others (IV, 1).

† See footnote, p. 7.

‡ See III, paragraph 2 and footnote.

have become clear to the reader by the end of this pamphlet.\*

In all three I have observed, in continuous operation, processes seemingly identical with those which 'the old poet' describes. Furthermore, from the times when they (as their students claim) respectively 'attained Knowledge,' the effect of any of the three on the relaxed and impersonally attentive student has seemed, and been described by the student as, precisely that described by three of 'the four enquirers'; in the Easterner's case, on all occasions described, observed or experienced: in the case of the two Westerners, on almost all. Moreover, throughout these same periods and again so far as my information, observation and experience go, each of the three has been able, again with the exceptions just noted, to 'relax' any student who was not already relaxed—and indeed any 'bystander,' as distinct from student, who sincerely wished to be relaxed—though the process has sometimes taken days, weeks or longer. For such relaxation quiet and harmonious surroundings have seemed helpful but not necessary: I have watched the relaxing process in successful operation in the midst of an air-raid; faith on the student's part has seemed helpful, perhaps necessary, in the case of the two Westerners, of no importance one way or another in the case of the Easterner. The Easterner's 'state of Knowing' seemed and was described as continuous: that of the two Westerners

\* The word *Mahatma* is frequently used in the West with meanings which seem based on misunderstanding or ignorance of the concept *atma*.

has seemed and been described, as intermittent.

Many responsible persons, well known to me, can corroborate from their own experience or observation all statements of fact made in the preceding paragraph. The word *relax* has been used in preference to any such word as *cure* or *heal*: each of the three teach (or taught) that mental health is a necessary concomitant and physical health a corollary, within Causality, of practising the doctrine, and that those who practise it can help others to attain such health; the process of relaxation will be described in the next section.

I do not know whether the following facts will seem relevant to others but narrate them in case they may.

I am not acquainted with, and took care to avoid learning, the Easterner's name; some readers will think this strange: others will understand it. In company with another Westerner, I met the man quite unexpectedly, a dozen years ago, under what seemed to me a very curious chain of circumstances; he was accompanied by a small band of students. He became, within a second or two of our meeting and as it were automatically, my *guru*, I his *chela*; during

\* The occasional inefficacy of the two Westerners in relation to the student is due, it therefore seems probable, to this intermittence rather than to lack of faith, on the student's part. It seems probable, too, even from the rationalistic point of view, that catalysis (see later) is the necessary and involuntary process of 'cause' and 'effect,' when a person in a highly developed 'state of Knowing' meets a person in a highly developed 'state of preparedness': the 'chance' or 'coincidence' of such meeting being similarly, itself also, necessary (though not rationally so) within Causality and, on both sides, involuntary.

the time when I was with him neither of us once mentioned, nor did I once hear any of his other students mention, any 'abstract' matter: and all matters discussed were discussed in a simple, everyday and practical manner. At the time of our meeting I had been studying *yoga* for some months and, previously, had been trying to prepare myself for its study for some years; I was in good mental and physical health; my meeting with the man marked the conclusion of the first stage of my studies.

He acted on me, mentally and spiritually, as a catalyst\*: as has, subsequently and in turn, each of the two Westerners. I had never consciously met a catalyst before; I know now that I had previously met at least three, all Westerners. Catalysis has been operative in me, so far as I know, only when my attention has been focussed on the catalyst; it has in no case been operative, again so far as I know, during the giving of doctrine: at such times my attention seems to have been directed away from the catalyst and has been focussed on the doctrine. Doubtless, in all harmonious human relationships, there is a process mildly akin to the catalytic; but it is mutual; moreover, sensation colours in-love-ness: sentiment, friendship; catalysis is a mental and spiritual process † and, as in chemistry, the catalyst is not involved. But he is fully conscious of the catalysis, and there exists between him and its subject that state of consciousness which Christian Tradition calls 'the love of the saints': a state where

\* See footnote, p. 31.

† An *intellectual* process, in what is commonly called the Aristotelian use of that word

nothing is asked, all is given, and all is clear.\*

The catalysis of me through the Easterner was immediate, as I have said, very strong, cumulative through the time when I was with him and the years which have followed, and not final; it was continued, widened and intensified through the younger Westerner and has remained, similarly, not final; this lack of finality has been, if I have observed and understood aright, not due to resistance by the subject, let alone failure by the catalyst, but necessary within Causality. Again if I have observed and understood aright, the catalysis—this particular and limited catalysis—is now in process of reaching finality through the older Westerner; I had, as indicated earlier, known the latter for many years before meeting either of the other two but, during those years, had not had the training necessary for study with him and had remained, therefore, ignorant of his powers. This pamphlet is written from the point of view which he inculcates in the student toward the doctrine which he and the two others teach and practise (in the Easterner's case, taught and practised during lifetime).

Those are the facts, so far as I know them. Some readers may doubt my veracity, others my reliability as a witness. Such doubts are, however, beside the point, because, as the attentive reader will note, neither I nor any of 'the four enquirers' commit ourselves anywhere in this pamphlet to the acceptance

\* It needs to be borne in mind that this state of consciousness is wholly free from personal emotion. Unprejudiced observers of psycho-analysis, who are themselves familiar with catalysis, have noted the minor resemblances, and the major differences, between the two processes.

of any statement made by 'the old poet,' which purports to be a statement of fact, if it is not verified by senses and reason : let alone to the interpretation of any such fact or facts, if they be facts.

But the attentive reader will note also that, in the next section, some stress is laid on the doctrine—common to all Tradition, including the Christian—that, 'When the disciple is ready, the master will be with him'; and, taking that doctrine in conjunction with this section, he may perhaps conclude that the student's job is, not to seek his catalyst, but to make himself ready for his catalyst's coming.

## PART IV.

### IN THE "ACTUAL" WORLD.

*'Before the eye can see, it must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must be insensitive to pain. Before the tongue can speak, it must have lost the power to wound.'*

*Traditional doctrine, passed down by M.C.*

#### CONVERSATION WITH AN OLD POET.

##### 1. *He looks back on his life.*

As Hiroshige's eagle, its head circled by stars, looks down from those high regions on Fujiyama and on the mountains and the valleys, the forests and fields and ocean, beneath Fujiyama : so, from the pinnacle of age, the old poet looks down on his life's events. The eagle cannot see the country on the far side of Fujiyama or the lands beyond the ocean : nor can the old poet see the country on the far side of his early childhood or the lands beyond his death ; but, as the eagle sees all which is spread out beneath as one landscape, so the old poet sees all which is spread out beneath as one fact. This, at least, is what he tells a little group of listeners gathered round him. The joys and the sorrows, the ills suffered and done, are, he says, no longer separate from one another ; and those whom he loved and hated, friends and enemies, women and men, are no longer separate from him : these things and people are he, and he they ; and all that went before and all that comes

after, this too, he affirms, is inseparably part of the one fact.

His students claim that, within the old man, there is Knowledge of what he says. We ask him : " Who taught you this Knowledge ? What, precisely, do you Know ? Is what you Know valid for us ? "

He takes the three questions in order, one by one.

*2. He speaks of his teachers.*

" Pain," he says slowly, " was the first effective teacher : not merely pain suffered but, even more, pain inflicted. That first taught me to try and look dispassionately at the inflicter of the pain : it was painful to watch the pain, but it was even more painful to know that I had inflicted it. ' Who is this I,' I asked, ' and what can be done about him ? '

" But joy, too, was a great teacher," he continues ; " I do not mean pleasure, though pleasure also helped in the teaching : but the overflowing ecstasy of ' the right rhyme,' the long rays of light at dawn and, most of all, the instant of illumination. In adolescence those instants came so fast that life grew an orgy of awareness. Then, year by year, they grew fewer and, when I was coming to ripeness, they ceased ; I lamented this, and a wise woman said to me : ' When acorn grows oak, oak no longer needs acorn-food ; oak is for use by others.' Now, in old age, I too see that there are no events but only processes ; the light is constant, and the instant has become all time.

" Example also," he goes on, " taught, taught greatly. I have been blessed in my exemplars : they

were not only wise but simple; more even by their doing than by their saying, and by their being more even than by their doing, they showed forth the light which shone in them.

"And faith," he continues slowly, "faith taught; in a sense, faith taught most of all: for faith 'works.' But what is faith?" he asks, speaking half to himself: "I have almost forgotten?"

One of his listeners tries to define faith. "May it not be described," he says, "as freedom from fear ~~in~~ regard to an issue: unreasoning and unqualified confidence in something—perhaps, even, in anything—which is beyond our self and our understanding? Such a description covers the theist's faith in God, the humanist's faith in man, the patriot's faith in his country, the schoolboy's faith in his football-team."

The old poet nods. "I expect you are right," he says; "but that is not what I meant. I meant that I had laid aside faith, as one lays aside a worn-out pair of shoes which have served well."

His listeners look at one another. The old man smiles.

"Why are you so astonished?" he asks. "Does not your own Christian Tradition teach you that, in heaven, faith is transcended by Knowledge? And did not the Lord Christ teach that heaven is within?"

Everything which the old poet has said so far, in answer to their question, his little group of listeners is prepared provisionally to accept; most of it lies, factually, within their own experience: even his statement that faith, a qualitative process, "works!"—has definite quantitative results.

William James, once again, gives many examples—"And such examples surround us daily on every side," says one of the old man's listeners: "not only the Churches, but the Quakers, the Mormons—that much-maligned and deeply cultured people—the Oxford Group, 'Christian Science,' 'Faith Healing,' afford abundant factual evidence." "A patient's faith in his doctor," says another, "is, as every G.P. knows, the doctor's greatest asset in helping to restore the patient's health." "Waley relates," says A, the first speaker, "that, at one period in Chinese history, faith, or something derived from faith, gave its possessors power, so that they could—and in fact, it is said, did—pass through storms of arrows, unscathed; a similar tale is told of Socrates; and members of the London Headquarters of the Oxford Group to-day claim, and obviously believe, that during the 'blitz' they were given 'guidance,' which enabled them to escape its dangers." "And, again in fact," says B, the second speaker, "whatever the cause, they did escape those dangers."

"But," the old poet warns his listeners, "remember that the founder of Christian Tradition laid much stress on faith, but the founder of Buddhist Tradition laid none."

### 3. '*The fourth road.*'\*

The old poet has answered his listeners' first question, in part at least. Now they talk among themselves.

"I recall," says A, "that eight precise rules for, or stages in, attaining this hypothetical Knowledge,

\*See p. 3.

which his students claim on the old man's behalf, are set forth in Buddhism and *yoga*,<sup>1</sup> doubtless elsewhere too. I remember also," he continues, "that—so some say—the nature of these rules, or stages, itself renders unprofitable their public discussion; perhaps that is why the old man does not go into more detail."

"That man there," whispers B, pointing toward one of his fellows, whose thoughts seem far away, "is said to be already in process of obeying, or attaining. And others of us study."

"But I seek," exclaims a third speaker, C, "and I do not know where to look."

The man whose thoughts had seemed far away speaks. "Read the rules," he says quietly; "study the stages; above all, obey the teaching: for every practical purpose it is the same in every Tradition and age; and our own Western Tradition tells us expressly that those who seek will, when they are ready, find."<sup>2</sup>

"Is the teaching the same in Christian Tradition?" asks A, seemingly surprised.

"Many Christian Traditionalists," D, the fourth speaker, answers, "say that their founder taught and practised those rules, passed through those stages, and summarized his Knowledge in two commandments often quoted but less often obeyed; they say, too, that those stages are referred to in the phrase, 'the stations of the cross.' The Christian Churches, however, say that the founder's teaching was unique."

"Couldn't I practise *yoga*," asks C: "it seems an effective Tradition?"\*

\*A paraphrase of Patanjali's *sutras*, suited to Western students, is given in *Yoga and Western Psychology* by Geraldine Coster (Oxford University Press, 1934).

"*Yoga* is not a Tradition"—again it is D who replies—"not at least in the sense in which we are using that word, though it has a known history older than some of the Traditions themselves: it is a discipline, and an exceedingly severe one. Many Westerners, and indeed many Easterners too, chatter about it to-day without understanding it; they would do better to study, and follow, their own Traditions. And no Westerner of our epoch should attempt to practise its exercises—they might be dangerous to him—except under the personal direction of a genuine *yogi*; few such are to be found in our hemisphere."

"Well, what about 'the Masters' then," persists C: "couldn't I go and study with one of them, and in time become a Master myself?"

D smiles, and quotes:

"'None, not one in all the world, is master,  
 "'Unless he has mastered self and keeps for tools  
 "'Brain, body, heart . . .  
 "'And they alone have mastered self, whose ill  
 "'And good like slaves obey the spirit's will.'

"Remember," he says to C, "that those who seek to obey the eight rules, or to attain the eight stages, call them the *Way*; it neither begins nor ends, they tell us, and is itself its own meaning. When you are ready, your master will find you."

Then he turns to the others: "Shall we get on to our second question?" he asks.

#### 4. *The old poet defines Knowledge.*

"What, precisely, do you Know?" his listeners ask the old poet again.

"Precisely nothing," he replies.

"But," protests C, "your 'students said—"

The old man shakes his head and smiles. "The words which they used," he says, "were: 'Within him there is Knowledge'."

"Surely that's quibbling, sir," exclaims C, a little impatiently; "if there's Knowledge in you, you Know."

"Let me explain," the old man says gently; "and let me begin by answering the question which, I think, you intended to ask: 'What, precisely, is the Knowledge within me?'"

The others murmur assent.

"That Knowledge," he goes on, "may be considered—but solely as a temporary measure, for the sake of simplicity in explanation—under two aspects: Knowledge considered with a selfward regard, and Knowledge considered with an otherward regard; the two knights in the old story, you remember, regarded the shield under two aspects, one looking at it from its silver, the other from its golden side: their regard did not, however, affect the nature of the shield. Let us first consider Knowledge with a selfward regard.

"It was agreed earlier among you, I understand, that, at each moment of our lives, each one of us has power of choice. Speaking with a selfward regard, I can say, simply and sincerely, that there is never one moment now in my life, when the choice is doubtful; it is always immediately Known. That is, of course, provided that at the given moment I am one-pointed; if I am not, it may take a few seconds to find direction."

"What do you mean by 'direction' and 'one-pointed'?" asks A.

"The answer to that will come," the old man replies, "when we consider Knowledge with an otherward regard."

"Do you mean," asks B, "that there is never any doubt in you as to the choice between right and wrong?"

"*Right* and *wrong* are not words which I would have used," the old man answers; "but, since they have been used, I shall go much further than you ~~and~~ say: 'There is never any possibility—provided always that I am one-pointed—of 'wrong' being chosen in me'."

"But, good heavens," again exclaims C, "do you mean to say that you Know—oh, very well then, that it's Known in you—what is right and wrong for—well, let us say, for me?"

"I did not say that," replies the old man; "and what you have asked pertains to the third question, which we have not yet reached. Let us first consider Knowledge with an otherward regard."

He pauses for a moment.

"By 'one-pointed,'" he goes on slowly, "I mean: 'the attention wholly, impersonally and reverently focussed, under the direction of the Knower, on an object'; we shall consider later what is meant by the Knower. The attention can be thus focussed, and the focus sustained, after due discipline, on any fact, any entity: I use these words in the sense in which, I understand, you have been using them; there is no Knowledge in me, nor any ground for thinking, that it can be focussed on anything

else, provided that both words are used unseparately : this matter, too, we shall consider later."

He turns with a smile to C. ~

" I have not said," he interpolates, " that *my* attention can be thus focussed on any object and the focus sustained. But, in fact, it is repeatedly thus focussed on certain objects and the focus sustained, sometimes for hours or longer.

" When the attention has been thus focussed on an object and the focus sufficiently sustained, that object is Known : completely apprehended alike in itself and in its constituent parts ; all facts and entities are Knowable thus. The focussed attention shares in this Knowledge and, even when the state of Knowing has ceased, continues afterwards to share in it, provided that the focus has been sufficiently sustained. Among the facts and entities thus Known or Knowable are the focussed attention itself and its constituent parts : this I, together with—for example—its organs and their respective states of health."

C interrupts : " Do you seriously expect me to believe all this ? " he asks, a little resentfully.

" No," replies the old man, again smiling ; " and, once more, what you have asked pertains to the third question. You will readily see," he continues, addressing all his listeners but particularly D, " that, even in an otherward regard, the distinction between 'self' and 'other' is thus no longer fully valid and that, when Knowledge is considered with an embracing regard, the only regard which is pertinent, such a distinction has no meaning ; that is what was in my mind at the beginning of this conversation, when I said : ' They are I, and I they '

"One further point needs to be noted. As I have said, any fact, any entity, is Knowable; but, except in the state of Knowing, we are human beings functioning in place-time, conditioned partly by heredity, partly by environment and, most of all, by inclination: I refer, of course, not to desire, but to disciplined and purposeful inclination in these matters. It is, therefore, not only easier but also wiser to focus the attention in the first stages of the Way on objects toward which disciplined inclination already points. Bear in mind, however, that the word *conditioned* has just been used, not *determined*: the sole determinant is the Knower. Let us now consider that."

### 5—*He speaks of the Knower*

The old man seems to go far away into his thoughts.

"The Knower," he says, "is a Person;\* not a Person in place-time, yet a Person. Or, perhaps I should say, the Knowers are Persons. Eastern sages sometimes speak of them as 'the Manikin at the far end of the telescope'; another old and wise Tradition with which some of us even in the West are familiar speaks of them as 'the Warrior'; Christian Traditionalists speak of them as 'the immanent Christ'; Buddhists, as 'the Charioteer'; Socrates called his, his *daimōn*; Saul met his on the road to Damascus; Francis Thompson fled from and was overtaken by his in Leicester Square; many call theirs 'the God within'; mystics, especially Western mystics, tend

\* See III, paragraph 2 and footnote.

to call theirs 'God': but there is nothing in the Knowledge within me to justify the use of that high name. None the less, when I speak of the Knower within me, my entity kneels. That Knower is always there; He alone is Master; He alone is the ultimate I; I exist but to serve Him; in His will is my peace. Therefore He, too, is sought as an object of Knowledge: in the last synthesis, its sole object; sought: and experienced; but not Known."

The old man pauses. His hearers are very still.

"Countless millions of us," he says at last, "have experienced our Knowers throughout the ages. Of these millions, some say that the same Knower abides in all: these are they who identify Him with God; others dare only to say, humbly: 'He abides in me'; and this last is all that I dare to say. But it is Known in me that a Knower abides in every human being: unless, it may be, they drive their Knower forth.

"The Knower within me is the direct cause of my existence. He has made me as an instrument for His use, in order to observe, test and measure, as I might make a clock, a pressure-gauge, a microscope: this I is a purposed extension of Him; but He has also made me, unlike the precision-instrument, in order to experience: this I is not only a utilitarian, it is also an empirical, extension of Him, as a character in a play is an empirical extension of and by its dramatist; and, as the character exists in the play which the dramatist has made, so this I exists in the world which that ultimate I has made. His world, of course, together with all its constituent parts, has been made—and, like its Maker, operates—within the framework of universe-form and, again like its Maker and uni-

verse-form itself, is subject to the law of Causality.

" You were speaking a short time ago—so I understand—of Shakespeare's sonnets; let us follow the analogy further. Sonnet-form is ' given ' ; into it Shakespeare pours, as one of you said, all that he has and is.. The ' greater ' the poet, the more consciously and readily does he accept the unalterable conditions imposed on him by sonnet-form; indeed, the truly ' great ' poet welcomes them, because they are a challenge to all that he has and is : they call forth the interpretative power within him ; and he writes his sonnet. That resultant and factual sonnet, which he has made, exists in its own right. I suggest, as an object merit-ing your focussed and sustained attention, the following thesis :

" ' Universe-form is given ; its conditions are unalterable. Within those conditions an Inhabitant of universe-form makes His world ; the greater the Inhabitant, the more joyously He makes it. His resultant and actual world exists in its own right.'

" I use the word *actual* in our present frame of reference, universe-form subject to Causality, in place of your word *factual*, and mean by it precisely what you would have meant by the latter word, if you had not confined fact, as I understand you did, to what you called the quantitative field ; we shall return later to your use of such words."

Once again the old man pauses. His listeners exchange glances ; C looks a little bewildered.

" You will admit, I think," the old man continues, " especially any artist-craftsmen among you, that the thesis is not devoid of interest. But I have not finished. A character in a play, as every dramatist

knows, often tries to take, and sometimes succeeds in taking, the bit between his teeth, as it were : the completed play, existent in its own right, is conditioned by the 'will' of its characters ; if they have taken the bit between their teeth and run away with the play, it is likely to be a 'bad' play : if they have conformed to the will of the dramatist and he knows his job, it is likely to be a 'good' one. I suggest, as a further object meriting your similar attention, the thesis that each one of us personally inhabits—here I shall use your own word—that factual world, existent in its own right, which each one of us, in conformity with or in opposition to the will of his Knower, personally has made, within the unalterable conditions of universe-form subject to the law of Causality.”

There is a silence. C breaks it.

“Do you mean,” he asks, “that there are as many worlds—factual worlds—as there are people in the world?”

“I suggested that you consider the thesis,” the old man replies.

“But—good lord—I mean to say—” C splutters with exasperation—“it’s not possible; the thing’s simply not possible.”

“No?” asks the old man gravely.

“Of course not,” exclaims C: “there’s no room.”

“Like the Mad Hatter’s tea-party?” the old man asks, even more gravely.

“Damn it all, sir, you can’t have God knows how many thousand million worlds bumping into each other all over the place like elephants.”

“It causes confusion,” the old man says, with a si-

"Every schoolboy knows," cries C triumphantly, "that two separate objects—to say nothing of billions of them—can't exist in the same place at the same time."

"That is the trouble," the old man murmurs: "they try to. But suppose," he goes on, "they are not separate?"

"How do you mean?" asks C.

"And suppose the actual worlds," the old man continues, "are not in place, nor even in time? Please remember my definition of *actual*."

"I'm trying to," says C, rather tartly.

"And suppose," the old man persists, "suppose the factual worlds are the actual worlds remade in place-time by us: all, actual and factual alike, within the same frame of reference, universe-form subject to Causality?"

C scratches his head. "I'm afraid I don't follow you," he says.

"No," says the old man, smiling; "but I think that you will, one day. In place-time the cube-root of three is, I admit, unlikely to be a ravishing blonde: in fact, my senses and reason have frequently assured me, rather regretfully, that it never can be. I have found them admirable servants but less admirable masters. They are trustworthy witnesses and agents in domestic affairs, so to speak, but in foreign affairs they are isolationists: they refuse to have any truck with any where or any time except place-time. And they have told me again and again that, outside place-time, the cube-root of three may be, for all they care, steak and onions, the New York Symphony Orchestra, or Charlie Chaplin."

Even C laughs. "I'm sorry, sir," he says apologetically; "I'm afraid I'm an awful fool."

"We all are, my son," the old man says, laughing too; "not least when we try to measure 'possibility,' outside place-time, by logic. It is clear," he continues, "that all similar difficulties or questions, for instance regarding the number of the Khowers, are—to use again the word which you have been using among yourselves—quantitative only and therefore, in this frame of reference, meaningless; similarly the examples which I have been using for illustration—the precision-instrument, the play, the sonnet, the actual and factual worlds—are merely symbols, most of them quantitative symbols: they are not the thing-in-itself; any more than my words speaking of these matters are the thing-in-itself: words themselves are merely quantitative symbols. In this connection there is a further point, which also perhaps merits your focussed and sustained attention.

"You agreed, I understand, that a sonnet's entity exists in an unchanging Now outside place-time; but, before reaching that agreement, you did, in fact, whatever your intentions, separate quality, as you called it, from quantity: and not solely for purposes of examination. Was that prudent? What would the artist-craftsmen among you say to such a separation of content from form in a sonnet: an existent and factual sonnet? You have used the words *quantity*, *entity*, *quality*; in my far youth we used the words *body*, *soul*, *Spirit*. Most of us used our words with the same unconscious separatism which you have shown in using yours; but there were a few—there have always throughout the ages been a few—who

used the words' unseparatingly: that is, they used the words *body* and *soul* to designate two inseparable aspects of 'Reality,' which they named *Spirit*; we shall come back to this word *Reality*.

" Think over the implications of that phrase, 'two inseparable aspects'; some of them may seem a trifle startling: even ideas so obviously ridiculous to rationalistically conditioned minds as 'the resurrection of the body' may begin to take on a totally new significance, and we to see how debased Traditionalist coinage has become in our hemisphere. The founders of Tradition may not have been quite so unintelligent as some of their adversaries and many of their followers seem to assume."

Once more the old man pauses. Suddenly his body seems frail and tired.

" It is nearly time," he says, " for you to go back into your worlds, and me into mine. But, before you go, was there not a third question which you had asked me? "

#### 6.—*The old poet suggests an operational test.*

His listeners exchange glances again; they wait for D to speak; he repeats their third question hesitatingly, and slightly changes its wording.

" Is the Knowledge within you," he asks, " valid for us? "

" The founder of Christian Tradition," the old man replies with seeming irrelevance, " is reported to have said: 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' I understand that you spoke some time ago of 'the simple believer': the simple believer may well be closer to the root of the whole matter

than those who set themselves to instruct him; he has that rarest of all senses, common sense: and he makes his world, in his own likeness, by faith; he has precedent. You seek to build your worlds on Knowledge; beware lest, in building them, you impair the faith of one simple believer. That is an additional reason why I shall try to make my answer to this question complete and clear.

"If by 'valid' you mean 'to be accepted on another's authority as valid for yourself,' the answer, for those few who seek, sincerely and humbly, to build their worlds on Knowledge, is 'No'; for those many who build their worlds on undisciplined inclination, desire, as the vast majority of human beings to-day build theirs, the answer, if the inclination, even though undisciplined, be toward faith, is 'Yes': because faith 'works'; but in all other cases the factually realistic answer is 'No': because, even if the authority be worthy of acceptance, it is not accepted.

"John Jones builds his world on the price of steel; Sam Smith his, on a pretty face; Bill Bush his, on a yardstick. John, Sam and Bill are, at the least, unlikely to accept on one another's say-so the other's foundation, however loudly that other speak: not even though that other threaten the heretic with hell-fire; still less are they likely to accept the warranty of Tradition." Nor indeed is there any reason why they should, if, in their inmost hearts, they are content with the worlds which they have built. John, Sam and Bill are, however, seldom thus content: often they are exceedingly discontent; and, in this last case, a different answer needs to be given."

The old man pauses again and seems to put his

thoughts in order. When he next speaks, it is with the impersonality of a mathematician repeating an algebraic formula.

"All Knowledge," he says, "is one. The Knowledge within James Jackson of an apple-pip is identical with the Knowledge within Jack Robinson of that apple-pip: the Known, that is to say the apple-pip, follows, in common with all facts and entities, the law of its own being; that law is not changed by being Known: it is merely verified. Moreover, the apple-pip is not separate from the apple, any more than the apple is separate from the apple-tree, the apple-tree from the orchard, the orchard from the ground, the ground from the planet, or the planet from the universe: it has merely been provisionally, temporarily and reverently isolated for purposes of examination; the process is familiar to every scientist.

"The law of the apple-pip's being is part of and one with the law of universe-form; Aristotle named this law *entelechy*: Eastern Tradition calls it *Causality*; universe-form always operates entelechically within Causality. It follows that like 'causes' and like 'effects'—as they are commonly thought to be: mistakenly, for both are inseparable aspects of the same fact—are, within the limits set by Causality, inevitably found together; faith 'works': disbelief weakens; prayer is 'answered': 'begging-letters' are thrown into the waste-paper basket; fright begets frightfulness: trust, trustworthiness; and so on: throughout the whole cycle of processes.

"None of this, however, is to say that Causality, or indeed law of any kind, necessarily governs, not universe-form alone, but also That-If-Anything-

Which-Informs. About That, so-far as the Knowledge within me goes, nothing is Known or Knowable : the sum of all Knowledge is total Knowledge of universe-form.

" Buddhist Tradition calls him who is worthy to attain such Knowledge an Arahat : and an Arahat who has attained it, a Bodhisat ; and it teaches that even the Bodhisat has a choice still before him : he can either become one with ' Reality '—' enter Nirvana '—or remain within universe-form and continue to help his fellows ; it also teaches that neither choice is more meritorious than the other : indeed, that in neither choice is there any merit and that merit does not pertain in any degree to universe-form or to any part or aspect of it ; merit pertains solely to ' Reality .'

" The word *Reality* has no assignable meaning, again so far as the Knowledge within me goes ; but it is a label convenient to designate without defining That-If-Anything-Which-Informs. Some think it probable, by analogy with the sonnet, that universe-form and universe-content are not two separates but one Whole : others, by analogy with facts and entities, that That - If - Anything - Which - Informs functions in accordance with the Law of Its Own Being. Such thoughts, however, are unprofitable : no thought, still less any word, can define in any degree the nature of ' Reality ' ; even the word *Spirit* is only a word : it is not the Thing-In-Itself ; and, in such a reference, that very phrase, *Thing-In-Itself*, is meaningless."

The old man has been speaking impersonally. Now he turns to his listeners.

" Like the apple-pip," he says, " each one of you functions in accordance with the law of his own

being : or can so function. But it is easy for us men and women to grow confused, because, as you yourselves have said, we alone among animals have power of choice. When we grow confused, most of us identify the law of our being with our self-will rather than with our Knower's will ; when we thus identify it, we mismake our worlds ; when we mismake them, we grow discontented. Other animals, not having this power of choice, seldom grow thus confused or discontented ; wild animals, perhaps never : their pains are of a different order ; domesticated animals, rarely : the misery of even a bombed, starved and hunted alley-cat, though agonizing to itself and to the onlooker with an otherward regard, is, generally speaking, sensory rather than emotional, let alone ratiocinative. But John, Sam and Bill, in addition to feeling sensory pains, grow emotionally discontented and ratiocinatively confused ; and they do so often : one might almost say, always.

" If, however, John, Sam and Bill each lays his self-will wholly aside, each will find, after a period of time directly proportioned to the rigour of his self-will's resistance, that his consciousness grows still ; and, if he continues to hold his self-will in abeyance during this experience, he will hear, in the stillness within him, a ' command.' But the self-will bitterly resents being laid aside and, even when this has seemingly been accomplished, tries to creep back in disguise : it is very skilled in disguise, and often masquerades as the command itself ; once the listener has heard the authentic Voice of the command, however, he will never mistake any other voice for it.

" If the listener obeys the command exactly, he will

experience a sudden and unfamiliar sense of peace: his confusion and discontent will, for the moment, have vanished. And, if he makes a daily, daylong and lifelong practice of thus laying aside his self-will and obeying such commands, he will find within him, eventually, 'the peace which passeth all understanding.'

"Furthermore, although, as this last phrase signifies, he will not be able—and perhaps even the Knowers themselves are not able—to understand the *why?* of Causality, he will no longer doubt the complete validity of that *why?*, even for his finite self, since he will now be able to watch its *how?*: to observe and examine, closely and in detail, not only the processes of his peace, but the very process of Causality itself. In other words, he will build his world on Knowledge; because Knowledge is, as already stated, Knowledge of process: of universe-form operating entelechically within Causality.

"I do not ask you to accept these sayings. Test them. Test these and all similar sayings by your own experience. Verify them for yourselves."

"But how can we?" exclaims C.

"Very simply," the old man replies: "by carrying out my suggestion and seeing whether it 'works.' "

"Sheer pragmatism," C murmurs under his breath; but the old man hears him.

"The founder of Christian Tradition," he replies, smiling, "is reported to have said: 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' If that is pragmatism, I am well-content to be labelled pragmatist in such company. If, however," he adds, somewhat sternly, "you mean that the findings of operational tests can

affect the nature of 'Reality,' which alone may be called Truth, you have paid little attention to what has been said.

"The saying that faith 'works,'" he continues more gently, "is, of all these sayings, perhaps the least difficult to test: and perhaps that is why 'the simple believer' builds his world on faith and why his teacher laid such stress on it. So test, first, that saying. Those who believe in using violence to enforce their self-will on others have been, for centuries, testing it in their own fashion and have now, by faith, begotten on fact the atomic bomb.\* You, I gather, do not like the atomic bomb; none the less, self-interested faith in what you regard as 'evil' produces 'evil,' just as self-interested faith in what you regard as 'good' produces 'good.'

"For those, however, who seek to build their worlds on Knowledge, the test needs to be strictly disinterested; it is necessary to take for it some neutral object, something which the tester regards as neither 'good' nor 'evil': for example, money. You, presumably, would not be here, listening to me, if your concern were money; you have probably, therefore, none. Let us at least suppose that you have none and that you see no prospect of getting any by means which you regard, without self-pride, as permissible. On no account lessen—if possible increase, and sustain—your efforts to earn aright; but at the same time—one of you has defined faith—perform an act of faith: believe in your inmost hearts—for no reason, 'just because'—that money, from some completely unexpected source, will come to you; go on believing it: and observe whether it comes.

\* See p. 74.

" You four appear to be Westerners : your minds, therefore, are likely to have been rationalistically conditioned ; so you may find difficulty in performing an act of faith with reference to a neutral object, for the act has to be unqualified and wholly sincere. If, in such a case, one of you grows discouraged by many failures, and decides to perform an act of faith with reference to an object which is, to him, not neutral, and performs it, and finds that it ' works,' and is and remains satisfied, he will be building his world on faith, not on Knowledge ; there will, therefore, no longer be any valid reason why he should not accept the authority of a Church. Similarly, if money is not a strictly neutral object to him in his secret heart and he thinks that he can cheat Causality, or if, indeed, the whole thing seems to him absurd, there will no longer be—for him—any valid reason why he should not manufacture atomic bombs : it is a logical corollary for those who seek to exalt themselves above Causality ; and he will be in no position to find fault with those who act logically, least of all with those who perform an act of faith with reference to an object which is, to them, not neutral and thus achieve their desired end, even though that end involve world-disaster.

" If, however, you succeed in performing your act of disinterested faith, and find that it ' works,' but think that this may have been due to ' chance,' repeat the experiment : repeat it as often as you find necessary to convince yourselves whether the saying that faith ' works ' is accurate. Causality does not cheat ; but remember : Causality cannot be cheated. And remember also : ' the pains are great '. The pain of

testing, disinterestedly, whether faith 'works,' is the least of those pains.

"One thing more. We who seek to build our worlds on Knowledge are, no whit less than those who build theirs on faith or desire, human beings subject to error, ignorance and, most perilous of all, pride: 'by that sin fell the angels'; far more than any others, we are vowed to humility and indissolubly bound to use for the benefit of our fellows, daily and hourly, any Knowledge which there may be within us, to lighten their burden and to ease their pain."

There is a silence.

"Would you be willing, sir," asks A at last, "to restate the rules governing the Way, or to summarize them?"

"The rules need to be obeyed," the old man replies, "not talked about; you know where to find them. And the comparatively simple preparation necessary before you can learn how to obey those rules which govern the first stages of the Way has already been made clear by one of your own number\*: he warned you not to battle against material power in material things, and never to let yourselves feel fear, anger, hate; he might have added: jealousy, greed, envy, and all those other diseases of the soul which devour the servants of self. This much, however," the old man goes on, "may be said with reference to that preparation. When one of those emotions assails you, *relax*: relax completely, as a baby relaxes; withdraw from activity, the circumference of your wheel, into your being, its hub: make no movement with your body, permit no movement by your mind;

\*See p. 13.

hold these, not rigid, but relaxed and still, as a kitten is held, relaxed and still, by the scruff of its neck. You can do this by turning your attention away from the emotion and its ostensible cause, and focussing and sustaining it, wholly, impersonally and reverently, on any object other than yourself.\*

" If evil—for that word may be used," he adds gravely, " to designate opposition to Causality, provided always that we do not regard opposition to our self-will as evil nor regard ourselves as separate from the evil-doer—if evil continues to assail you, whether it be the evil of your own thoughts or the evil deeds of others, continue to relax; on no account oppose it: 'accept' it; you will find that it is 'conducted' through you by your acceptance of it, as lightning is conducted through a building by the lightning-conductor: you, like the building, will remain untouched. Not necessarily your body; but your being. Your body may scream with agony: and, if you are slain, you are slain. But the quality of your last and most completely focussed moments on earth will be, according to some Traditions, 'part of that entity which'—as has already been said among you—'in an unchanging Now beyond place-time is you': and, in any event, will be the quality of Arahatship itself.

" Acceptance is comparatively easy, when you are the victim; when the victim is one whom you love, it is by far more difficult: but it has to be achieved. That, too, is part of the pains: the bitterest part.

\* The old man's students state that, once the pupil has attained proficiency in attention-focus, he is advised by his teacher to apply it, in the next stage, to the self and its emotions; but that, before the pupil can do this correctly, he has to learn to turn it completely away from these.

" All such preliminary and, as it were, negative preparation for the Way has been summarized by Tradition in three words: ' Lay self by '.

" When, finally, our preparation has been fully made and we are ready to tread the Way, there is even less which may be said. But what may be said is positive; and it has been said, with incomparable clarity, by the founder of Christian Tradition. If his words need newly stating for you to-day, they may perhaps be restated, very simply and very humbly, thus: ' Love with your whole being the Voice which speaks within you. And, every instant of your life, treat every living thing with loving-kindness '."

#### *7. The old poet's listeners discuss him.*

Those who have listened to the old man are, once again, alone together. They are silent.

" We have come a long way," says D at last, " from that moment when, entrusting ourselves to a great *As If*, we leapt into darkness. We did not know what was on the other side of the abyss into which we leapt: we did not even know whether it had an other side; but we were desperate: even that leap seemed to us less intolerable than the self-evident nonsense of ' safety first ', which has brought us face to face with the possible destruction of mankind by the misuse of nuclear fission. We leapt therefore: and fell for ever, it seemed, through ' the dark night of the soul ', where there is nothing; and now we find ourselves here. Where is ' here '," he asks: " and what next ? "

The others say nothing.

" One thing only," he continues after a little while,

" is clear to me at this moment. That far side from which we leapt is, seen from this side, within reach of my hand. Senses and reason still wait there, to guide us, if we wish.'"

" What impressed me most," says B, " was that, throughout the entire time when I was in his presence, I felt surrounded by a solid, a tangibly solid and impregnable, wall of love. I could lean my whole weight on it. For the first continuous period of time in my adult life I felt ' safe ', as safe as if I were in the womb again. But this feeling seemed to proceed, less from what he said or did, less even from the way in which he said or did it, than from what he was."

" Yet he used the word *love* only three times," says A; " and once it was quoted, and once it referred to love felt by us, and only once did it refer to love felt by him : and then the word which he used was *loved*; his exact words were : ' Those whom I loved and hated '. Clearly he no longer hates any one or any thing. Do you think," he asks D, " that he no longer loves any one or any thing ? He claimed that faith is transcended by Knowledge ; perhaps love is also : personal love."

" Was it *his* love which surrounded us," D replies : " or—if what he said is true—was it the love of his Knower, or even of our Knowers ? Love and Knowledge may be equal and inseparable manifestations of ' Reality '."

" Once or twice," says A, " I thought that he was going to mention other Inhabitants of universe-form, in addition to the Knowers ; they seemed on the far fringe of his mind. Perhaps, in dimensions beyond ours, a hierarchy of such Inhabitants exists, of whom

the Knowers are next in order above man and, above them, some Order which is to them what they are to us; perhaps, on their far side, the Knowers too are Known, as, on our far side, if what he said is true, we are Known by them. 'But that,' the old man would say, 'is an unprofitable thought, for it is not about facts or entities, and these alone are Knowable'."

"He seemed to see all things as a pattern," D goes on; "was that because he viewed them from age, or because he viewed them with Knowledge? But I am reasonably sure that the pattern was not what is commonly meant by pragmatic," he adds, with a glance toward C, who has said nothing since he murmured 'Pragmatism' and looks perplexed and unhappy; "the old man was examining in their order objects which had been laid out, as it were, on the table in front of him."

Each of the old man's listeners seems to be following his own line of thought.

"And *truth*," A now continues, "was a word which he used only once: and then but to imply that truth is beyond the reach, not only of us, but of the Knowers themselves. Yet everything which he said seemed instinct with truth: it carried conviction; to most of us at least," he adds, glancing in turn toward C,

"But in this case also," says B, "our sense of conviction seemed to proceed, once again, less from what he said or even from how he said it, than from some quality within himself, his very being, so to speak. I say his 'being'," he goes on thoughtfully; "and yet he had no 'self', in the ordinary meaning of that word."

The two speakers look at one another. "It all seems contradictory," says A. They turn toward D.

"Selflessness," D says, "is commonly believed in the West to be negative. It is precisely the opposite, as we have seen ~~today~~ with our own eyes. But the belief has been strengthened by counterfeit doctrine claiming to be Christian, preached by the selfish masquerading as the selfless to conceal—from themselves also—their secret desires. Eastern Tradition likens the person in process of becoming selfless to an onion from which skin after skin is being peeled, until, at the end, there is nothing left of the onion—except its smell: this, Tradition says, is now not only pure, but incomparably stronger."

The other two laugh, and the face of C brightens.

"But that smell," he exclaims almost gaily, "is 'conscious I'; it cannot be anything else. So my soul is not only immortal: it is I, and knows that it is I."

A and B turn on him, but D checks them. "Gently," he says: "we are all fellow-travellers; and this man, too, leapt with us." Then, to the man who has just spoken, he says:

"Some Traditions teach that the soul has further opportunities for learning, for purification, after the death of the body; some indeed teach that, unless the soul joins freely in this task of purifying itself, it has no alternative within Causality but to go on suffering, until pain has burned it pure. And it may well be that the unchanging Now in which, as we believe, our entities exist is unchanging only to our human eyes, watching from place-time; to the Inhabitants of other dimensions, if there be such, our unchanging

Now may seem as transient and mobile as, to us, the waves of the sea. But we do not inhabit those dimensions : we inhabit these ; and you have heard little of what the old man said, if you think that his 'onion smell' is, or even resembles, your 'conscious I.' Everything which he said, everything which he was, bore witness that, as a person, he did not exist save in relation to his Knower."

"Not I live," quotes B, "but Christ liveth in me..."

"Exactly. And, like the author of *Galatians*, the old man taught, also, that this is an experience open to each and all of us ; his every word, his very being, was a continuous affirmation and reminder that—according to him—'heaven' itself is a state of being, that it is attainable in place-time, and that it is directly proportioned to each person's individual obedience to his Knower's bidding. 'How can we attain heaven "there,"' he would say, 'if we have not attained it "here" ?'

"Yes," D suddenly exclaims, "if self is to be laid aside, it has to be laid aside here and now ; we have only our dailiness : there is only now ; that much, at least, is at last clear to me. And the laying aside of self, this also clearly, is a process : it is not an event. Even that 'dark night of the soul,' which we experienced when we were falling through the abyss, even that sense of rebirth which we experienced in the old man's presence, are processes : processes taking place in each now of each one of us before we leapt, thenceforward, henceforth, always ; always, that is to say, until, like him, we are burned pure. But he would be the first to deny that he is pure : 'The "onion smell"

proceeds, not from me,' he would say, 'but from the Knower within me; only in so far as I obey His bidding, only in so far as I am nothing save His instrument, only in so far as "conscious I" has ceased to exist, am I pure.' ~~And~~ he would add, I think: 'Self-righteousness bolts and bars the gate of heaven; self is the bar to Knowledge.' Yes, 'the pains are great'."

"Do you mean," C asks, humbly, "that I am self-righteous?"

"Let me put it less harshly than that," D answers with a smile. "A kuten may assume that man exists for its convenience; a man, that God exists for his—and, if God does not even exist, it is exceedingly inconsiderate of God."

The other two chuckle; C is silent.

"Then I suppose you mean," he says at last, "that my personal immortality consists solely in my Knower?"

"That, I think," D replies gently, "is what the old man would say: your abiding immortality."

"I understand," says C quietly.

There is a long silence.

"Well," D says at last, "I asked: 'What next?'"

Again there is silence.

"I suppose," C says hesitantly, "that the next thing is to test the old man's sayings. But I am frightened; I am terribly frightened."

"Of not finding?" ask his fellows.

"No," C replies slowly; "of finding."

## PART V. IN THE EVERYDAY WORLD.

*'Fear knocked. Faith opened the door. No one was there.'—Old saying.*

Like the four enquirers, we face nuclear fission ; we see with our own eyes the results of separatism, as they affect the world—as they are in process of destroying a world—to-day : it is ourselves, not others, whom our separatism has exiled. Is any other course of action, of practical daily action, except separatism, possible—not necessarily for 'man' : 'man' is an abstraction—but for *you*, for *me*? You and I are facts, facts with which you, I, others, have to deal, daily and practically. *Practically* is the operative word, and chatter about practice is no use, to ourselves or others ; this whole pamphlet remains chatter, unless it be applied in action.

The old poet has suggested a course of practical daily action. He has specifically said or implied that, if we follow his suggested course of action daily and practically, we shall attain these results, among others :

1. We shall be continuously happy and serene, whatever our material circumstance ;
2. We shall be able to help others toward attaining this happiness and serenity, whatever their material circumstance ;
3. We shall never, under any circumstance, be in

doubt or hesitate over the choice between 'right' and 'wrong';

4. We shall not be self-deceived.

Those are large claims. If they are justified, they are important, not least so to-day. Are they justified? Every Tradition, from beyond the beginning of history, says that they are, wholly. But few in our hemisphere nowadays accept the statements of Tradition. For those who do not, the old poet has suggested a practical method of testing these claims, though the would-be tester has been warned that 'the pains are great'. Are the pains greater than those which you suffer? You alone can answer that.

The pains which you—and every thoughtful person in the world—suffer to-day include, not only your present personal cares and troubles, but the bitterly reasonable expectation that all those whom you most love and all the works of man which you most prize will, within a few years, be suddenly and violently scorched to a cinder. Such pains may seem to you greater than any other pains could be; and, in that case, you may perhaps ask: "Is the method of testing, which the old man has suggested, a trustworthy operational test?"

What constitutes a trustworthy operational test?

Outside your window is a street: across the street is a tobacconist's shop; you have no cigarettes: you consider crossing the street, with the hope of buying some. Your senses and reason, supported by your life-experience and that of your fellows, tell you that, if you faithfully conform to the traffic-regulations, proceed in a quiet and orderly manner, and are moderately sane in body and mind—that is, as sane

as most of us—you will, in all human probability, succeed in crossing the street. They do not tell you that you will necessarily, nowadays, find cigarettes at the tobacconist's. On your way across the street you may be knocked down by a ~~thug~~ or by accident; you alone can decide whether your hope for the cigarettes justifies that risk. You have an alternative: to remain for the present without cigarettes.

Within you is a mental street: across the street, you have been told by some of your fellows who seem to you reasonably reliable in other matters and clearly believe what they are saying in this matter, is a state of mind; you have not that state of mind: you consider crossing the street, with the hope of attaining it. These your fellows, supported by certain experiences of your own, which hitherto you may have tried to ignore or to explain away, and by a large—a very large—body of testimony for many thousand years, tell you that, if you faithfully conform to the mental traffic-regulations and so forth, you will, not in all human probability but in fact, succeed in crossing the street. They further tell you that on its other side you will find, necessarily, unlike the cigarettes, the state of mind which you hope to attain. You have been warned that your crossing of the street will be exceedingly painful; you alone can decide whether your hope for the state of mind justifies that risk. You have an alternative: to remain in your present state of mind.

You decide to cross the street.

You cross it: the pains of crossing rack you; but you attain for a moment the hoped-for state of mind. This state of mind seems to you worth the pains:

next day you repeat the crossing ; the pains microscopically decrease : the state of mind lasts a tiny moment longer. You make a daily practice of crossing ; the pains markedly decrease : the state of mind lasts markedly longer. You take up your residence on the other side of the street ; the pains cease : the state of mind is permanent ; its results are those which the old poet had claimed that they would be. *Subsequently*, your senses and reason verify your findings.

That, if a statement of fact, seems to describe not inaccurately a trustworthy operational test ; and assertions to the contrary by rationalistic extremists, especially angry assertions, seem lacking in common sense : particularly, since the test is precisely that type of test which has resulted in many major scientific discoveries, including the atomic bomb itself.

You alone, however—on the supposition that you find yourself unable or unwilling to accept Tradition's warranty—can decide whether the statement is, for you, a statement of fact and, if so, whether you consider the test trustworthy ; no outside person can cross the street on your behalf : if you wish to cross it, *you* have to cross ; no outside person can determine the truth or falsity, for you, of all these sayings : if you wish to determine them, *you* have to determine ; and, if you consider the test trustworthy, and test the various sayings, and find them to be statements of fact—that is to say, if your senses and reason subsequently verify your findings—no outside person can act on those findings on your behalf ; *you* have to act.

In the interpretation of such facts, however, if you

find them to be facts and if you feel that you need guidance in their interpretation, Tradition once again stands ready to guide. But you are under no compulsion to accept its guidance; and even if you accept, it is *you* who accept: it is *you* who select, invent or discover that interpretation, if any, which, in *your* judgment, fits the facts.

All sincere Traditionalists, and many thoughtful and sincere people who are not Traditionalists, believe that the Western world to-day desperately seeks—and needs—guidance on subjects which have been touched in this pamphlet. Such subjects may perhaps be summarized in the following questions, worded intentionally in popular terms:

1. "Does 'heaven' really exist?"
2. "If it does, how can I 'get there'?"
3. "Do 'right' and 'wrong' really exist?"
4. "If they do, how can I ascertain them?"
5. "What happens to 'the soul' after death?"

The old poet's answers to these questions are clear, direct and simple. He replies:

1. "Yes."
2. "By exactly obeying the 'commands' which, if you strictly follow the methods prescribed, you will hear within you."
3. "Yes."
4. "By exactly obeying the 'commands,' which, if you strictly follow the methods prescribed, you will hear within you."

5. "It depends entirely on you."<sup>\*</sup>

These, or Traditionally equivalent, answers are generally accepted throughout most of the East, and used to be throughout most of the West†. The fate of mankind in the immediate future may well depend on the West's re-acceptance of them. Before they can be generally re-accepted, however, they need to be generally re-acceptable. And they can only be generally re-acceptable, if they are kept simple, interpreted simply and sincerely and, above all, shown true in practice, daily and hourly, by those who proclaim their truth. The spiritual and moral collapse of the West, and of the industrialized East, is due not least to the failure of some of the Churches, and of an overwhelming majority of their 'churchmen,' to show in their lives what they speak with their lips. Their insincerity undermines the faith of 'the simple believer,' strengthens the position of the extreme rationalist, and disheartens deeply the seeker for truth. The last feels that it is as useless to search for spiritual

\*The old poet identified 'the soul' with 'conscious I', but spoke of Traditions which affirm its continued existence; and he laid stress on the individual's power of choice; also he stated that faith is, for most men, beneficial and is justified by its works. Those, however, who hold that faith in the soul's continuing existence is necessary to re-establish a tolerable standard of human behaviour generally throughout the industrialized world and claim this his teaching supports their advocacy of such faith, need to keep steadfastly in mind the teaching's focal point: that, ultimately, the soul exists only in its Knower. Close students of Christian Tradition may think that, in these matters as in many others, the old man's teaching strictly conforms to it.

†Psychologically equivalent answers are given today by many psychologists and by almost all psycho-therapists. Some Traditionalists, of proven wisdom and deep learning, wholly condemn psychology; but even Cæsar's penny had its uses:

surety amid ecclesiastical mockeries, as for moral surety among the moralists. And, for those who feel thus, the old poet might amplify his answers to the third and fourth questions in some such terms as these.

" Morality,"\* he might say, " issues from Knowledge; and, since Knowledge is one, Morality is one. Those who build their worlds on Knowledge Know this; those who build theirs on faith believe it; those who build theirs on desire sometimes deny it. Yet all can act on it. For every man can Know 'right' and 'wrong': they consist in obedience, or disobedience, to his Knower's bidding. Each time that any man obeys his Knower, the act is 'right': each time that he disobeys Him, the act is 'wrong'; whatever code or custom may say. And spiritual surety springs from identically the same root; moral and spiritual surety are inseparable."

This, or something closely akin to this, is recognized, blindly it may be but implicitly, by those Governments in our hemisphere which call themselves democratic: such Governments, in theory if seldom in practice, permit 'freedom of conscience' and acknowledge 'the sanctity of the individual.'

" And the individual is truly sacred," the old man might continue, " for he is the instrument and repository of Knowledge. To violate the sanctity of another is, therefore, the gravest 'wrong' which any man can do: a 'wrong' against not only the Knower within himself but the Knower, also, within that other; Morality, being one, never enjoins such violation: indeed, it expressly forbids it, always. Such

\* As distinct from moralism; see p. 5 and footnote.

violation springs from separatism : the differentiation between 'self' and 'other' in our daily thinking and doing, and the consequent empty effort to benefit ourselves at the cost of others, because we have failed to recognize and accept the law of Causality. The final aspect of separatism is the wilful and enforced extinction of life. And, since number is merely a material measure, the extinction thus of one life on the gallows, of thousands by bombing in London or Berlin, of hundreds of thousands in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of millions in Nazi concentration-camps and death-chambers, or of uncounted billions by nuclear fission, do not spiritually differ. To him who exists solely in his Knower, it matters no more, and no less, if the entire planet, or one baby, is blown to bits."

Such, then, would be the old poet's answers to our questions.

Were those answers statements about material fact—an atom, a mathematical formula, a chemical reaction—they would, very properly, if they were considered of sufficient importance, be tested scientifically by scientists to ascertain their truth or falsity; such tests might take many years and be attended by great personal pains to those making them : neither of these possibilities, however, nor the jeers of other practitioners of science, would deter the testers ; true scientists, those who attempt to examine material fact impersonally in order to understand the fact's own nature, have much to teach us others, who attempt research into matters with which they do not primarily concern themselves : we would do well to study, not only their method, but their example. The old poet's answers need such testing ; they may also merit it;

they may indeed merit as closely detailed and impersonal examination, in the scientific spirit and by the scientific method, as the constitution of the atom itself. It may even be that they too, like it, conceal within themselves inexhaustible reservoirs of immeasurable power : that they are, not merely by poetic analogy but in spiritual fact, spiritual atoms.

Some of those who recognize this possibility may consider, therefore, that they should organize themselves for the purpose of thus examining his statements and similar statements made by others, of collating the results of their examination and of publishing their findings. Those who hold this opinion are referred to the first paragraph of the note on page 79 of this pamphlet.

Others again, who have come much of the way with the pamphlet's author on this voyage of exploration, may need, above all else, consolation : consolation for their own sufferings and for those of others ; and they may find it, ironically perhaps, yet perhaps legitimately also, in the recent saying of a distinguished scientist :\* "The discovery of the atomic bomb," he claimed, "is due in the first place to faith." Like a faint echo, we hear a tiny and infinitely remote whisper : "Faith 'works'," it seems to say, "as in 'good', so in 'evil'; but, as in 'evil', so also in 'good'." If those words be true, faith, which brings consolation, brings at the last even more than consolation : it brings that in which it believes. And the consensus of human opinion has always believed that —to revert to our earlier terminology—quantitative results are, in fact, produced by qualitative causes ;

\*On August 26th, 1945, in a B.B.C. broadcast.

even the scientist's saying, like everything which the old poet said, seems, itself too, to confirm that conclusion which has been reached, generation after generation, century after century, by daily common sense.

Those, on the other hand, who need consolation but lack faith, may find their consolation in the hope that this daily common sense will succeed in setting up, before it is too late, "a single over-riding world authority,"\* which can enforce the will of all the peoples of the earth, of all ordinary folk like ourselves, toward using nuclear fission for the benefit, not the destruction, of mankind. Perhaps, if they are British, they will feel a sanguine pride in the fact that representative leaders of the two main parties in our Commons have advocated the establishment of such an authority and declared our readiness to submit to it. And their hope will be strengthened by the further fact that many poets and prophets of our own race, including men so diverse as Shelley, Tennyson and Kipling, held fast to this same hope, and by the clear evidence—clear to any dispassionate observer—that the two mightiest "nations" in the world to-day, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., both desire international peace.

Others, yet again, recognizing the destructive power of mutual mistrust and driven therefore to probe more deeply into the nature of things, may find consolation in a different thought. They are familiar with the doctrine that myth is but the faded recollection of bygone fact, and that the legends of

\* "Foreign Affairs Commentary," B.B.C., August 13th, 1945.

Atlantis, Babel and the Flood commemorate world-shattering cataclysms long ago; they recall that, in Brahman Tradition, mankind is closely approaching the end of the Black Age, that its end will be accomplished in another world-shattering cataclysm, and that the Black will be succeeded by a new Golden Age—the whole vast cycle of Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron beginning once more; and they perceive close similarities in this teaching to much in Christian and Judaic Tradition. Such readers will, perhaps, turn for guidance and courage to that wise and beautiful play, *Green Pastures*, banned by our British separatism from our British stage, and there learn anew those parallel lessons which the theatre too teaches: that microcosm is in all respects the image and mirror of macrocosm, that the same law governs both, and that cause and effect are not two separate things but inseparable aspects of one and the same thing. And they may find a deep consolation, again perhaps legitimately, in the thought that they also are building an Ark, where wisdom may take shelter from a coming flood and be found, on the summit of a new Ararat, by those who come after.

And many in the 'new' countries of the world, particularly once again the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., will point with gladness and pride to their young men and women and say: "See what results, when the child is decently fed, housed, clothed, given fair opportunity. If this results even in our semi-civilization, what might not result in a real civilization, where every other consideration was subordinated to the sanctity of the individual? If this results, when merely quantitative conditions are improved, what would not

result, if qualitative conditions were made new? The ape," these say, "stood upright; now, man has learned to fly. We are entering the atomic era: the second great step in the evolution of human consciousness has begun."

And on those who say this, believing it truly in their hearts, the old poet would smile, it may be, and murmur to himself: "I am old; you are young, and yours is a brave hope: may it prosper."

But the reader who has come the whole journey with this pamphlet's author does not ask for hope, nor lean on faith, nor need consolation, nor seek to prove or disprove. He is concerned with two facts, two only: and they suffice him. He has a conscience, and obeys it; and he lives in his now.

For such a reader the word *conscience* is not a debased Traditionalist coin; it has its full etymological meaning: "knowing with the altogetherness"; therefore, conscience and conduct are, for him, inseparable: the inner and the outer aspects of being. Conscience bids, conduct does; but being is: and only being is, and it is always in a now, and in a now only. Thus, rooted in being, he lives in his dailiness, from each now to the next, doing what conscience bids.

But conscience, which tells him what to do, does not always tell him how to do it: in these cases, for guides, he has reason, experience, humility. And they, no less than conscience, teach him that the law which governs his being and binds conscience and conduct, the inner and the outer, inseparably into one, binds the universe itself also into one vast inseparability and governs each tiniest constituent part: cell,

man, planet, solar system, universe, each with its own being and each, microcosmically or macrocosmically, one with all ; an immeasurable hierarchy, it may be, issuing from and returning to 'Reality' : Spirit Itself, Pure and Absolute Being, Which, in a beginningless and endless Now, alone Is. But, the guides within warn him, this last is speculation, and irrelevant : for Spirit is only known to man in, and as, Spiritual Law, the Law governing and uniting all things.

Such a reader, standing at his ultimate crossroads —or at any, since each crossroad is, in its own now, ultimate—knows that, for him, the choice of the 'right' road depends, wholly, on unswerving obedience to the commands of conscience and unwavering recognition and acceptance of Spiritual Law. And, the guides within tell him, this is true for every man. But, unseparate from his fellows, he knows also that he is as indivisibly one with those who choose 'wrong' as with those who choose 'right.'

Such a reader has, and therefore needs, no defences : his being, 'fluid as water' in the words of Laotzu, slips through the interstices of pain and place and time. No one can take anything from him ; for only his being is his : and this he holds in trust for every living thing ; or, more truly, he is his being's : and his being holds him in trust. Thus his being does. And thus, as on a ceaselessly revolving stage, he treads the Way :

*'Which neither begins nor ends,  
Nor ascends nor descends.'*

## NOTE.

The publisher and the author regret that they cannot enter into any correspondence concerning this pamphlet. Those readers, however, who hold the opinion mentioned on p. 74, are invited to send their names and addresses, typed or clearly written on a single sheet of paper (indicating whether Mr., "Mrs.", Miss, etc.), together with a stamped self-addressed envelope, to "Atomist," at the publisher's office. A full list of these names and addresses will be compiled and sent in due course to all such readers, who will thus be able to communicate with one another, should they wish to do so.

It is suggested that any reader, who tries to practise in his daily affairs the doctrine expounded by 'the old poet' or an analogous doctrine but finds himself perplexed, in the midst of an angry and unhappy world, by a SPECIFIC difficulty in its application, should state his difficulty to HIMSELF, in the form of a WRITTEN QUESTION; the question needs to be worded simply, clearly and briefly, in terms of FACT, not of emotion or ratiocination. If, after careful and impersonal reflection, he still finds himself unable to answer the question, he is invited to send it, WITHOUT COMMENT, to the author, at the publisher's office; a second pamphlet is projected, in which an attempt will be made to answer such questions and to deal with such difficulties. But, once again, the author regrets that he cannot enter into correspondence.

